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17

Am I in love?

Is it raining in Seattle?

Where can I find a cheap airline ticket to Boston?

How can I learn Java?

Where can I find a job in advertising?

Who was the 16th president of the United States?

What is the melting point of copper?

What are the reviews like for "As Good As It Gets"?

What are the Counting Crows tour dates?

How can I cure my headache?

Should I go to film school?

What is the market

What is the exchange rate for Danish Krone?

What's a good recipe for egg rolls?

How far is it from Peoria to Kuala Lumpur?

What is my car worth?

How can I curse

What is the stock price of TCSI Corp.?

Who won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1937?

Where are my socks?

Who is the king of Thailand?

Where can I buy ice skates online?

Where can I find a depth chart for the Bears?

What is the diameter of Jupiter?

What are the latest fashions in New York?

How much do I need for retirement?

How many albums did Miles Davis make?

What's on TV tonight?

Who is going to the World Cup?

Have A Question?

Where can I tip a cow?

Where do babies come from?

Who starred in "Repo Man"?

What are web cookies?

Why is the sky blue?

Cap of Microsoft?

Is Madonna's mole real?

e in Finnish?



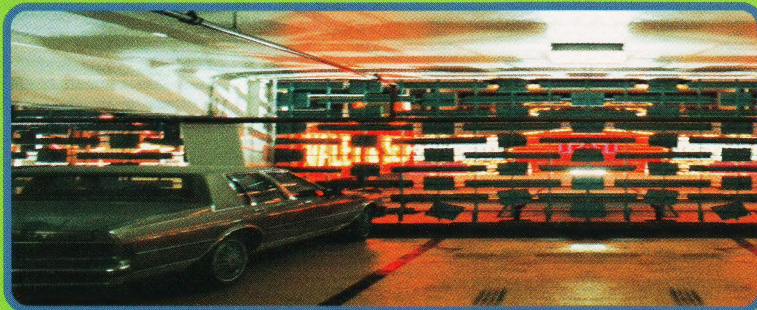
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MONDO 2000

THE GUEST DESIGNERS ISSUE

This issue's collaborations with the following designers proved tricky, but well worth it. It was web technology that assuaged my *how-to-deal-with-changes-long-distance* fears. We used email and ftp sites for instant communication. We also used the phone. On a Macintosh you can do an instant screen shot at 72 dpi by holding down the shift, command and the number three key. Cropping to the important stuff and jpegging it made for *easy-to-send-over-the-net* visuals. Mondo is on the web at www.mondo2000.com and our marketing director, **Beth Slatkin**, did all that html code herself. Beth got the web site rolling while I trekked out across Europe after the last issue went to press. When I got back there was much work to be done. Too much work. Felt like El Niño was a-coming. So, many thanks to everyone who pitched in and helped brave the storm of another production.

TOM PITTS

The ever-dependable trendy guy **Tom Pitts** has done spectacular work this issue, *starting* with the cover. Tom not only did the cover, but also the spine, a collage using his friend Joel Wheeler's original art. **AND** he forged new ground with his photos, design and layouts for the **Nina Hagen** article, **AND** a special stoic rarity of subtlety with the **Oliver Stone** piece. Tom flew to L.A. with Steve Beck and captured Oliver's visual story. **AND** Tom's-forever-luscious-eye-candy **Fashion**, he brings us Cuban *darlings* (however cunning and wicked). **AND**, with the help of make-up artist David Searle, Tom shot **Orbital** for the Electronic Music section. Ever an artist, **AND** a vegan.

GUSGUS

GusGus (a band, designers, photographers, filmmakers, cute & handsome kids in sweaters who our music editor Rob Phoenix met and liked) guest DJ design & remix our **Electronic Music** section. All the way over there in Iceland, these info artists add a cool grace to the globalism of **MONDO**. Using their own photographs of nature they crafted a unique dance of text and image.

MISCHA BEITZ

Mischa Beitz from *Design Quarterly*, a long time friend of our erstwhile managing editor Cedric Puleston, interviewed, edited and designed the **Frank Miller** article. Mischa has a sexy low voice which wasn't the reason we let him get away with doing *sooo* much work, but it did conjure up flesh and blood in my mind everytime I looked at those strong-jawed Miller comics.

(cont'd on page 6)



AND photo by Tom Pitts

ABOUT THE COVER

Photography: Tom Pitts

Hair & Make-up: Jorjee
& Nina

Stylist: Jorjee

Vintage Jacket: Waistland

Bustier: Azadine Alia





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ISSUES OF NOTEWORTHY PRAISE

Toy and weird stuff photographer **Stephen Webster** has sent me pix for years, and finally I wised up and got him in this issue, right here on the masthead page. For the letters we were inspired by one of **DAH's** edgy photos, so much so that we reinvented the section to go with it (look for the t-shirt soon). I did a Siren shoot for the stitch-in & blow-in cards with the help of stylist **Cynthia Lueng**, models **Andrea Marie** and **Star** from Look in SF, and a few delicate props from the Bone Room and Tupper & Reed Music. Photos in the Electronica section came from the record companies, except for **Tom Pitt's** uncanny shot of Orbital (taken at the Beresford) and my dramatic portrait of Percy Howard (done here in the, um, salon). **Steve Kromer** generously and warmly let me dig through his stacks of family photos to pick the definitive "JPB-behind-the-facade" glimpses for the Barlow interview. **David Rankin** and **Peter Hamlin** were two last minute serendipitous finds for the Melatonin extract. **DAH's** abstracts allowed me to conceptualize the very fringey Zero Point Energy.

Charles Ostman humoured me with great willingness for the Laser Weapons pix and **Mark Shepherd (Brutal Gift & Co.)** rendered the ever so scientifically detailed illos. Queen Mu was quick to spot the talent of this issue's video games artist, **Kino**, whom Chris Hudak introduced to us. Kino wins a big extra sentence here for adroitly following my direction to do a double truck spread leaving a place within the image for text.

Of course, we found the intriguing, shadowy, murky background *sooo* beautiful we hated to put any type over it anyhow... Speaking of type, **Psy/Ops**, Mondo's official font foundry, has a new web site.

Checkout their gorgeous font designs at www.psyops.com

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THANKS!

Heartfelt thanks to Eric Gullichsen, David Kalish, and Richard Grossinger. Kudos to our beloved Jennifer Slatkin, a.k.a. Ad Matrix. And to our old friends Tulip Graphics and Canterbury Press in Berkeley.

Mo thanks: Karen Wiessen, publicist for Soul Coughing; Gene Mallove, Sabatino, Mark Comings, Brian O'Leary, AWL, Frau Sitte, the Inn Keeper, Thor, Sweet Princess and Kyle.

Rob thanks: the goddesses at Formula, Girlie Action, Green Galactic and Shorefire; Dr "O" the Sushi Messiah, Cosmo and especially the divine Vrah Diva.

We all thank: Erich Shienke and the CoMA folks; Rudy Rucker, Jr. and Magnolia Editions; CellSpace; Stephan Williams, Will Linn and the generous help from Blasthaus (or was that MM?), Noah Thorp, Isaac Feldman, and Separate Ways—for their musical maddness. And Andy for marrying me.

VOTED GOD'S GIFT TO GRAPHICS GURUS — Macworld (Dec '97)

Thanks, God. And thanks Rob for talking to **Molly Ford** at UMAX who sent the **s900 604e/233** mac clone. This fast toy arrived with a 2.1 GB SCSI hard drive, 32 MB of RAM (upgradable to 1040MB *whew!*) and 4MB of VRAM which drives my 17" Lapis monitor. It has 7 external, as well as 7 internal SCSI ports and I have just one left for **Yamaha** to send the **CRW 4260**. This single processor CPU was my willing date, but I'm ready to go double dutch with the **s900/250DP RAID**. With Apple pulling licenses, prices are dropping to *very* attractive levels. Get a cheap clone now, Apple obsoletes each of their products every six months anyway.



—Heide Foley

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Separating an image from its background is a common need when appropriating photos for illustrations or isolating an element for design purposes. Sometimes doing an insanely great cutout can be super easy. Unfortunately, it only works when the element you want to cut out is fairly well contrasted against the background you need to cut it out of—blondes on a black background, brunettes on white, etc.



1) Using the Pen tool, draw a path around the portion you desire to cutout from the background.

At the areas where using the Pen tool just doesn't cut it—don't. Get the general shape only, being careful to keep the path within the lines of the desired shape. Make the path a selection and save it as a channel.



2) Using the Lasso tool draw a selection around the hard-to-get edges and copy this part of the image.



3) Don't deselect. Without deselecting create a new channel. Be sure the



channel reflects which way you need to contrast.

4) Paste the image into the floating selection. This keeps it in the exact same spot, assuring a dead-on cutout.

5) Use the eye-dropper in Levels to contrast the background and image. The erase tool and air-brush may be needed to get rid of highlights.

6) Now load this selection onto the one created with the path and delete.

The result is a very precise outline of the area you want to cut out from the background.



Do this to as many places as necessary on the image. I used this technique for Star's hair and for the gauze cloth which is partially transparent by her foot.



You can tweak the channel by tightening the selection using the Modify menu or softening the edges by applying a Gaussian blur. Then load the selection onto the layer you want to cut out of the background (you may need to invert your selection first).



For tips on creating shadows see MONDO issue 16.

—HF



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By Chris Hudak

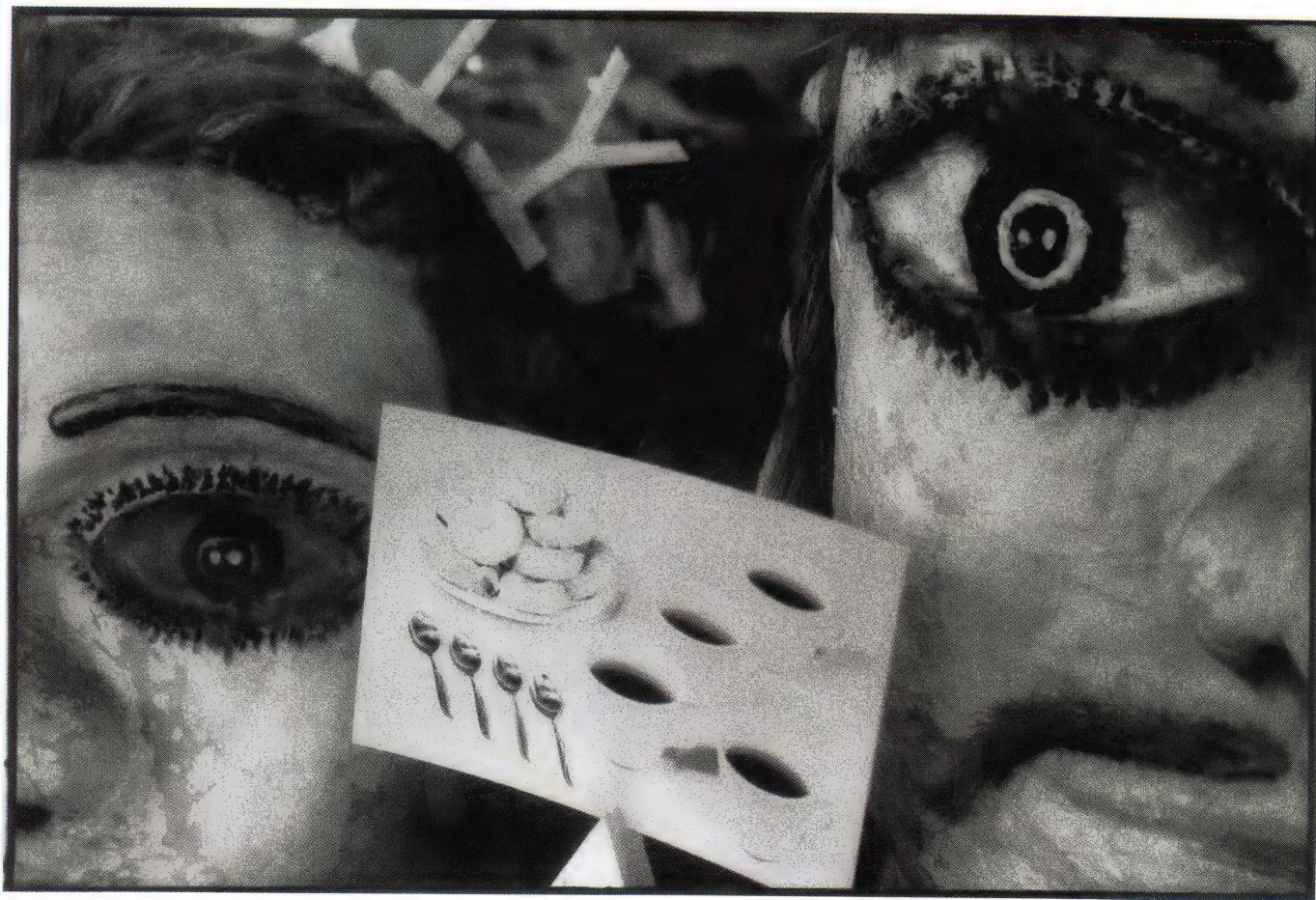
Virtual Blood Sports

MONDO [9] 2000

UNCOLONIZED NAMESPACE IN



WWW.TONIC.TO
DOMAIN NAME REGISTRY



Photograph by DAH

THE WIDE AWAKE CLUB

MONDO:

Do you really think this very american-modern-folklore has such an inherent value so as to be portrayed with a post-industrial psychedelic-influenced tech jargon? If the Net is about a new language, you'd better turn to poetry, it's awfully inventive in its obsolescence... Don't you have the feeling that to be more than an .alt-centered magazine you should include more intemporal talk and subjects? And you have plenty of them at hand, being in that imaginary world of high tech mysteries out there in California.

My point could be this: How do you figure, in the case of an american ideologized world, our

common lives on earth? In the perspective of the rule of american symbols—which is to my mind each day more and more accurate but does not necessarily fit in the ancestral manners of many peoples—what could survive of an intellectual biodiversity? And if one could interpret the Net existence as a somehow brilliant metaphor of the organic world, a sphere echoing the terrestrial sphere, it has also the role of avoiding the america-centered Weltanschauung.

Maybe I should stop reading Mondo.

Arno David
XX, impasse de la Source
France

This america-centered Weltanschauung is that one and the same which to your mind is each day more and more accurate? Try giving up language masturbation and go for the real thing—communication. H.F.

R.U. SIRIUS,

You rat bastid, you! Here I am, 33 years old and fat, living a humdrum existence doing planetarium shows and downloading titty pictures from the net, thinking that the high-octane, rapid-cognition, FTP->Gopher->WWW, smart-drug-using, techno-house-listening, tarot-card-forecasting, C++ programming, AI developing days of my twenties are gone for good, when suddenly I get the latest (the last?) issue of Mondo 2000 and just as it did when I saw

it for the first time in 1992, IT SET MY BRAIN ON FIRE!!!!!!

Now I am unhappy, because instead of concentrating on doing "The Earth is Bigger than the Moon" for eight year-olds, I want to design self-communing avatars, but before I do that I want to write a book about Atlantis and study some disinformation and hump Reese Witherspoon 'til she evaporates. And that's just *right* now—I still haven't finished the damn thing because I got dizzy.

As you did in 1992, you ripped me out of black and white and dropped me into technicolor, and I will NOT forgive you for it!

Patrick Dijusto

R.U. & MONDO FOLK,

Today, I picked up a copy of the new issue of Mondo at WaldenBooks down here in de bayou (Lafayette, LA). All I can say is, "You are Queens & Princes among editors/writers/layout-doods-&-grrrls. I've read every issue of Mondo from its inception (actually, I began w/ High Frontiers... but that is a long time & many tabs ago... get's me wet-eyed & nostalgic just thinking about dem daze...):

THIS IS THE BEST MONDO YET / YOU RULE THE NEWSSTANDS & SHD BE NOMINATED FOR EVERY MAGAZINE AWARD DEY IS. The depth, the intelligence, the clarity of yr thinking—in the interviews (R.U., you are the master... I'm pretty keen... but you are the master...), the choice of persons-to-be interviewed, the angles you've taken, all genius. & that's just the interviews. The essay-contributions are groovy too (I sent Chris Hudak e-mail about five nights ago, and, lo & behold, he shows up in yr pages...

We (this Tribe, this Thing that is Happening) are the Vibe.

Wired, Yahoo (especially

Yahoo, p.u.), all the cyberslicks, have much to worry about: Mondo is back in a big bad way... Am FUCKING GLAD to see it's so.

Warmest of the Warm,
Todd Brendan Fahey
Publisher, Far Gone Books
P.O. Box 43745
Lafayette, LA 70504-3745
fargone@popalex1.linknet

DEAR EDITOR,

A little over a couple of years ago I was barreling through the state of New Mexico and stopped in a groovy little cafe in Albuquerque that served a damn good latte along with lots of magazines and journals and zine-like stuff to peruse. I saw Mondo 2000 for the first time and a really big *wow* formed in my head. I've read your magazine ever since... and recently was truly excited to find myself at the Crucible Steel Gallery opening of Mondo's latest offerings. Seeing those covers up close and fiery was a little like a wet dream. I got to meet the Art Director! Between the art-tattoos happening on the Persian rug, the slithery music behind the velvet curtain and the flying champagne corks, I gotta tell ya, it was the best part of the CoMA Fest. Great job!

Love and kisses,
Mindy

DEAR MS. KENNEDY:

Merrill Brown asked me to respond to your July 29 letter regarding your concern over MSNBC's use of the name, "MSNBC Mondo Guide" and the sub-section names, "Mondo Movies", "Mondo Music", "Mondo Books", "Mondo Cyber" and "Mondo Web Sites." MSNBC denies any wrongdoing in using the word "mondo" in the above headlines and did not in any way infringe or dilute your alleged

trademark rights in the names, "Mondo" and "Mondo 2000."

As you know, the word "mondo" means "world" in Spanish and is also used extensively in our culture as a synonym for the adjectives "large" or "huge." MSNBC used the word "mondo" in these headlines to signify that this section was essentially a huge guide of links to other sites of interest on the Internet.

Nevertheless, to avoid a nuisance claim by your company, MSNBC has decided to remove this feature name from its web site and consider new names. This action in no way prejudices MSNBC, NBC or Microsoft or impacts its future decisions to adopt the word "mondo" in other manners. Because MSNBC has removed the "Mondo Guide" name and sub-section names from its web site, we will consider this matter closed.

Sincerely,
Scott Behm, Corporate Attorney
Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA

DEAR MONDO:

I am currently working on a documentary film called *THE MORRISON CASE: Dead or Alive*—the subject being the possibility that Jim Morrison faked his own death in 1971. There are several indications suggesting that this is the case. One such being that Jim Morrison's son, Cliff Morrison, lives here in Los Angeles. Yet the non fiction book *No One Here Gets Out Alive* states on page 317 that Jim Morrison's wife, Patricia Kennealy had an abortion, and that there never was a child. There are many more discrepancies when you investigate the Morrison case, so to resolve this enigma I propose that an SIR (Subsurface Interface Radar) test be performed on the grave. Essentially this test is an X-ray of the grave and will expose a high definition video

image of what actually lies there. Based on my research, I feel that this test will show Jim Morrison's grave to be empty.

Just a story idea you might be interested in. If you have any comments or questions please call me.

Sincerely,
Michael Noonan
Hollywood, CA

DEAR EDITORS,

In the wake of Waco, Ruby Ridge, the Oklahoma City bombing and numerous other domestic incursions, an "anti-terrorist" bill has been passed, additional federal and local law enforcement has been funded to the tune of \$1,000,000,000, airport security has been tightened to the point of the absurd, privacy and First Amendment rights have been increasingly attacked, censorship is on the rise, a national I.D. card instituted, welfare privatized, prisoner rights curtailed, and

prisons have been constructed at an alarming rate.

The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, Public Law 104-132 on April 24th, 1996 (S.735 introduced by Sen. Dole) was passed despite opposition by a wide mixture of strange bedfellows across the political spectrum. It has wide-reaching consequences that ought to chill the spine of every decent American born into the luxury of freedom in this increasingly unfree New World Order. Some of the features of this law are: it establishes a five-member commission to study activities of federal law enforcement agencies; removal of protections on interception of wireless messages; increased scope of BATF; prohibitions on providing material support of any kind to organizations the Attorney General or Secretary of State have deemed as international terrorist organizations; freezing of domestic groups' bank accounts

(with no measures for appeal) if the government believes they are agents for foreign terrorists; exception to rules of discovery in civil proceedings when the government claims classified materials are involved; habeas corpus reform will curtail the ability to appeal previous court decisions where evidence was destroyed or suppressed by prosecutors (as in Waco and Oklahoma City); authorizes antiterrorism training programs. The military-industrial complex so prevalent during the Cold War and Vietnam years has transformed into the prison-industrial-police-attorney complex, sharpening its focus from a war against the Soviets to a war against the individual liberties of the American people. It is time to wake up to this peril.

Johnny Liberty
Cascadian Resource Center
[Johnny Liberty is a well-known lecturer on personal sovereignty and

matsuri productions • fax 44 (0) 171 419 4746 email • matsuri@matsuridemon.co.uk web site (under construction) • <http://www.matsuridemon.co.uk/>

the Author of Sovereign American's Handbook. He can be reached at: 800.299.4497]

AHOY FELLOW STOWAWAYS ON SPACESHIP EARTH!

While Mondo has been surfing the light fantastic, ominous perturbations have been coming out of Washington. Are you folks aware of Public Law 104-132—the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Law? You should be.

Are you "likely to engage" in the "gathering of information" related to the Federal Government or its Officers? Do you provide "any kind of material support including a safe house, transportation, communications, funds...or training" to "any individual or organization" you "reasonably should know" plans to do so? (Do you show your kids or sibs how to surf the Net, or subscribe to any publication which acknowledges the intra-beltway circus or its performers?)
TERRORIST!!!

Gathering information on government activities, or supporting publications or non-profit groups which do, now legally constitutes terrorism. And if we're loud enough or vocal enough in holding legislators responsible for their actions (or holding them up to public ridicule), the President, Secretary of State, or Attorney General may simply declare us "terrorists." Any of us. At any time. "The determination of the Attorney General...shall be controlling and shall not be subject to review by any court." "No question concerning the validity of the issuance of such designation may be raised by a defendant in a criminal prosecution as a defense in or as an objection to any trial or hearing." Done deal. As "terrorists"—and we are all "terrorists" waiting to be so designated—we "shall have no right of discovery of information... nor... the right to seek suppression of evidence.

Further the government is authorized to use...the fruits of electronic surveillance and/or unconsented physical search."

And what are the teeth?

Per Public Law 95-147 "all depositories of public monies... and insured institutions... shall perform duties as fiscal agents of the United States"—such as seizing all our assets and canceling our credit cards the day we are designated "terrorists." Trial? What trial? How're we gonna find gas money to get to work? How're we gonna eat? How're we gonna go anywhere? Hope we've gotta lotta high-end electronics and a soft-hearted pawn broker handy.

And if we do? Or if we keep a few K in gold under the mattress for just such an occasion? "Assistance may be requested from any Federal, State or local agency, including the Army, Navy or Air Force..." Now let's not get



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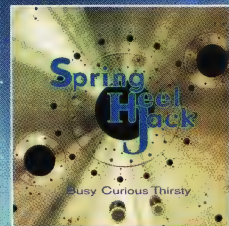
Bob Marley - artist code: 0151



HOWIE B Turn the Dark Off

Howie B's *Turn the Dark Off* is a beat-driven, hip-hop masterpiece packed with compelling melodies, nutty samples and pure funkiness.

SPRING HEEL JACK
Busy, Curious, Thirsty
The follow up to the much
lauded *66 Million Shades*.
Spring Heel Jack dig deeper into
their unique brand of drum and
bass, dub, jazz and hard
breakbeat science.



BOB MARLEY Dreams of Freedom

Ambient re-translations
by Bill Laswell of eleven
classic tracks from Bob Marley
and the Wailers including "No
Woman No Cry", "The Heathen",
"Exodus", "Midnight Ravers"
and many others.
A Revolutionary Dub
Tactic Transmission.

LOOK GOOD! FEEL GREAT!



Lazy K

A brilliant funk rock, hip-hop, psychedelic soul jam by Basehead guitarist Keith Lofton.

"(Basehead's) fragile melodies and quavering vocals create a quiet sadness that's never been heard in rap before; the result is one of the bleakest expressions of African-American angst since Sly and the Family Stone's *There's a Riot Goin' On*."—Details



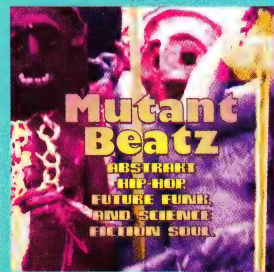
Promised Land:

Future History

Two CDs of mind-boggling Drum + Bass, one mixed by Mo' Wax recording artist Peshay and the other featuring bonus classic tracks by LTJ Bukem, Roni Size, Lemon D., Rogue Unit, Skanna, DJ Crystl, Helen T., and more.

"Expert mixing and a sublime collection of grooves."

—Time Out New York



Mutant Beatz

A wild, futuristic fusion of Hip-Hop, Drum + Bass, Dub, Electronica, Soul, and Funk.

Features tracks by Faceless, Lazy K (ex-Basehead), Rude Kulcha (featuring Bill Laswell & Afrika Baby Bam from the Jungle Bros.), Heavy Handed, Euphonic vs. Soothsayer & Dr. Israel, Black Pearl, Moonstar, Survival Soundz, and more.



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paranoid, but do you really want to know about the "Effective Death Penalty" part of this law? Go to www.thomas.loc.gov and check it out.

As for me, I'm canceling my subscription to Harper's and burying my head in a stack of Mondos... unless... of course... you print this letter.

Aiiiiieeee!!!
deep C

DEAR MONDOidZ

I read about you guys for years in Rushkoff and Dery and all of that cyberfoo... and I thought you were a buncha wacked out new age utopians ripped to the gills on smart drugs, lsd and high priced toys for silly brats. Then I stayed with a friend who happened to have the full collection. Man, did they ever get it wrong.

HHHey... you guys are highly literate, skeptical to the point of paranoia, and obviously very post-new age. Oh yeah, and probably wacked to the gills as well.

Keep up the good work.

Brian Mancini
Philadelphia, PA.

MONDO 2000

Issue #16 promises Reese Witherspoon on the cover. Reese, babe goddess of my every fantasy, and a smarty pants to boot... WHERE IS SHE????!!!! All you have is that interview with the dood who did *Freeway* (a killer movie tho). He's cool but why no Reese interview?

Oh well. Liked the William Gibson and the CIA/LSD thing. And any magazine that gets behind Robyn Hitchcock is ok in my book.

Joe Serrano
Babylon, New York

QUEEN MU AND COMPANY

I'm ecstatic over yet another MONDO finally on my doorstep. The issue (#16) had a nice flow to it... zeitgeist piñata indeed (whatever the hell that means). It gets so nicely thick and paranoid at the center what with Harry Horse, Todd Fahey, Disinformation, and that Halperin weirdo. And then the vibe smoothes with the music section. (Nice Yoko interview, although she may as well have been talking to herself).

Speaking of James Halperin, consider that his clueless Orwellian fantasies have earned a great deal of praise and attention in the media. We're living in a time when people we used to think of as rational will actually justify the de facto censorship of a film based on Nabokov's *Lolita* on ethical grounds. It's a pod people country full of promise keepers, promising to never utter a discouraging word. Al Gore is on the TV pleading with artists to form a "partnership" with the government so that there'll be "social responsibility." Stalin said the same thing, only he didn't have to ask.

Jim Walden

TO HEIDE FOLEY:

What do pouty half-naked girls have to do with cyberspace or the new edge? Why does MONDO 2000 have to look like a Calvin Klein ad? Please, more content and less sex!

Sylvia Pastorelli
Berkeley, CA.

Um, Sylvia Darling, I suggest you pick up a copy of MONDO 2000 and actually take a look at it. Just which trench-coated (like our #16 cover) Calvin Klein ads are you referring to? As for pouty lips, I sincerely

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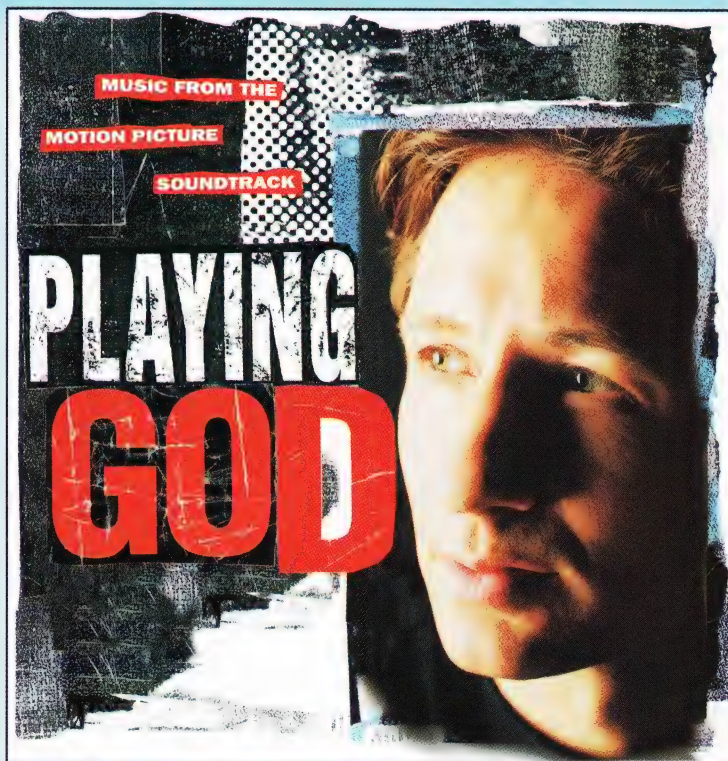
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NAPRA Review



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Guitar Player magazine



Cooler Heads Prevail Akira Satake (ALU-1003)

A rollicking jig bumps headlong into a crescendo of female Bulgarian vocals; Native American chants cascade over bouncy African-Irish rhythms -- welcome to the exuberant sonic landscape of Japanese composer and banjo player Akira Satake. Featured artists include Johnny Cunningham,

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Wind and Wire magazine

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Exposé



Saatus Kirile Loo (ALU-1004)

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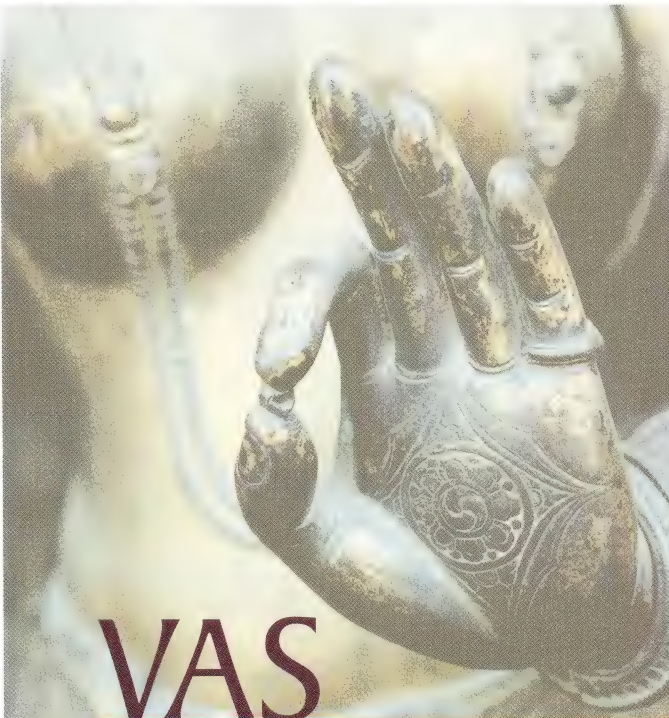
and totally captivating voice of this enchanting artist.

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advise you to stop thinking of a fictional film character giving the birdie (re: reese pic) as a come-hither signal... As for half naked, which winter clad model from our fashion spread did you absolutely distort in your brainwashed cranium? If you managed to find some cleavage in the Sarah McLachlan photos, I guess you spent a bit too much time in the dark. Finally, instead of erroneously accusing me of selling out, I think maybe it is you who needs a little bit of sex, perhaps with some half-naked pouty Calvin Kleiners. But good luck finding them, they aren't in MONDO.

—Heide Foley, Art Director

HI, MY NAME IS YEVGENIY

Recently, I saw the issue of Mondo 2000. I was so excited and fascinated that my poor English can't let me to describe all the emotions I had. I am magazine-designer, for 12 years, from Moscow (Russia) I've been in New York for two years, and have collected many professional magazines like PRINT, HOW, COMMUNICATION ART. I have always been ardent fan of extraordinary design, and new solutions to design problems. I thought that those catalogs were the future of design. However, after I saw Mondo's Cybermania I was completely swept off my feet. My blood was boiling and I was salivating with thirst for more as I looked through the first issue I accessed.

Very soon I will pay a visit to my designer friends in Moscow who I think would be as shocked as I was to see your work. I would like to find out how I can purchase six to ten issues of Mondo to show my friends. Unfortunately, there is only about three weeks until I leave. **HOW CAN I GET MONDO AS SOON AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE ?**

Truly Thankful,
Yevgeniy Serch

Join the Wide Awake Club. Submit rants, raves, reviews, and other ramblings to our rough and ready staff.

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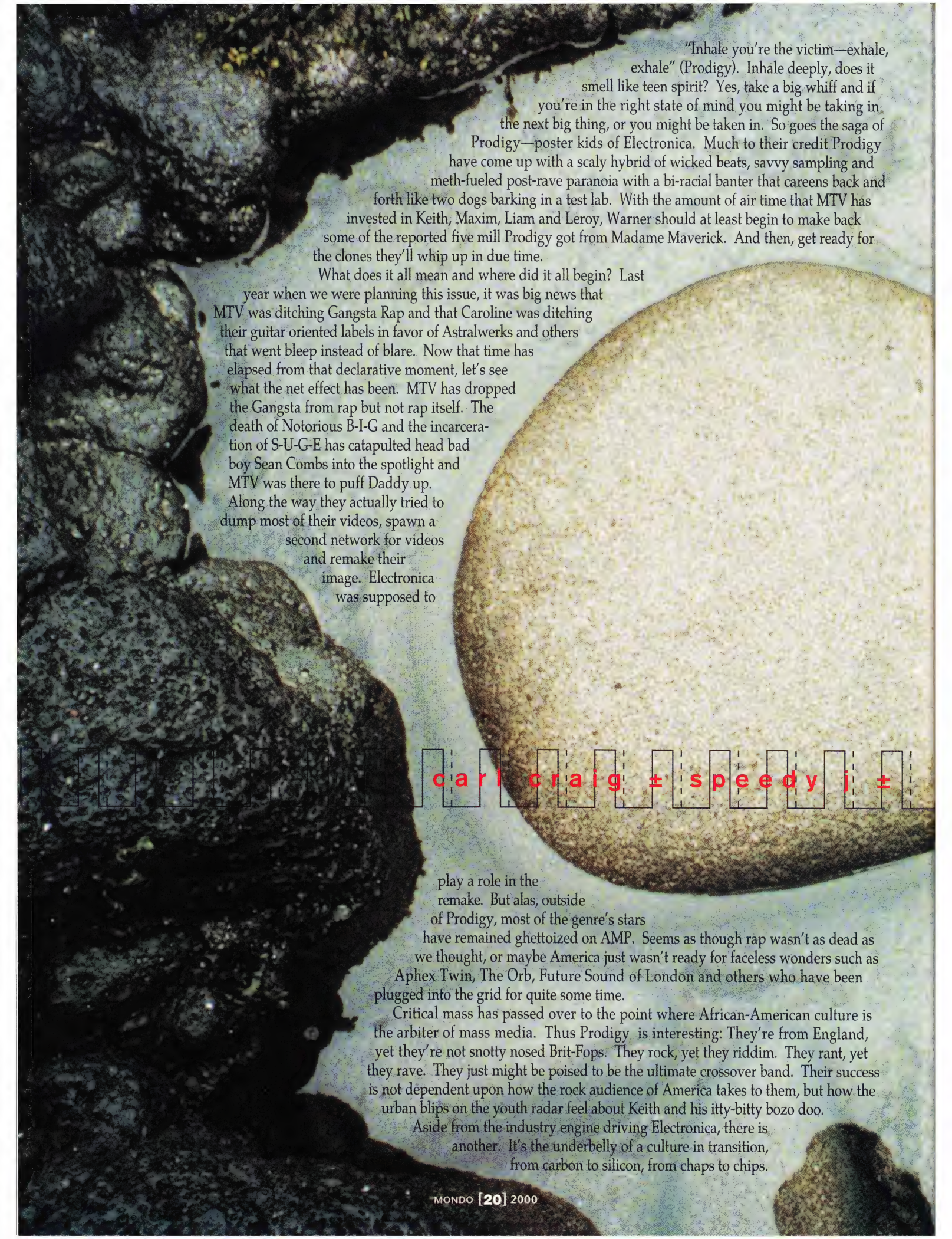


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"Inhale you're the victim—exhale, exhale" (Prodigy). Inhale deeply, does it smell like teen spirit? Yes, take a big whiff and if you're in the right state of mind you might be taking in the next big thing, or you might be taken in. So goes the saga of Prodigy—poster kids of Electronica. Much to their credit Prodigy have come up with a scaly hybrid of wicked beats, savvy sampling and meth-fueled post-rave paranoia with a bi-racial banter that careens back and forth like two dogs barking in a test lab. With the amount of air time that MTV has invested in Keith, Maxim, Liam and Leroy, Warner should at least begin to make back some of the reported five mill Prodigy got from Madame Maverick. And then, get ready for the clones they'll whip up in due time.

What does it all mean and where did it all begin? Last year when we were planning this issue, it was big news that MTV was ditching Gangsta Rap and that Caroline was ditching their guitar oriented labels in favor of Astralwerks and others that went bleep instead of blare. Now that time has elapsed from that declarative moment, let's see what the net effect has been. MTV has dropped the Gangsta from rap but not rap itself. The death of Notorious B-I-G and the incarceration of S-U-G-E has catapulted head bad boy Sean Combs into the spotlight and MTV was there to puff Daddy up. Along the way they actually tried to dump most of their videos, spawn a second network for videos and remake their image. Electronica was supposed to

carl craig ± speedy j ±

play a role in the remake. But alas, outside of Prodigy, most of the genre's stars have remained ghettoized on AMP. Seems as though rap wasn't as dead as we thought, or maybe America just wasn't ready for faceless wonders such as Aphex Twin, The Orb, Future Sound of London and others who have been plugged into the grid for quite some time.

Critical mass has passed over to the point where African-American culture is the arbiter of mass media. Thus Prodigy is interesting: They're from England, yet they're not snotty nosed Brit-Fops. They rock, yet they riddim. They rant, yet they rave. They just might be poised to be the ultimate crossover band. Their success is not dependent upon how the rock audience of America takes to them, but how the urban blips on the youth radar feel about Keith and his itty-bitty bozo doo.

Aside from the industry engine driving Electronica, there is another. It's the underbelly of a culture in transition, from carbon to silicon, from chaps to chips.

In rock, the guitar was the preeminent tool of destruction. It was and will always be connected with the sacral exploits of Page, Hendrix, Clapton, Beck, et al. Rock *was* the guitar and the guitar *was* male mastery—the phallus trained and untrammelled. With the advent of sampling, one doesn't need to know how to bend wires on wood, just how to capture it on a computer. It's that simple. The DJ or the Producer has replaced not just the lead guitarist, but the whole fucking band. Rock is dead. The phallus is dead and we're left with the digital transference of energy and sound.

This is a radical shift. DJ's become facilitators of consciousness, not necessarily pariahs of performance (Keoki and Moby excepted).

Rock gave us the beginnings of group consciousness personified by the Beatles and reaching it's zenith and nadir with the festivals of the sixties. Punk brought back some of the soul that rock had denied. Rap chimed in with a rawness and humor that hadn't been seen since the early days of Punk, but eventually suffered from the same harder-is-better trap. Polarization occurred in both camps, with the Punks taking either extreme positions on the left or the right and the rappers getting caught in the nets of their own mythologizing. Alternative rock saved the day for just a moment, but gave way to flannel clad fads and experiments in lo-fi lifestyles and sounds.

Lounge stirred up our constant desire for nostalgia, a soporific antidote for chaos and the rag-bag thrift store aesthetic of Grunge.

Now, like it or not, Electronica is here.

Does that mean it will flourish?

Maybe, maybe not. But in keeping with the spirit of exploration and honoring the digital demons that drive us, we have chosen four artists that represent what Electronica was, is and might be. Out of the hazy dusk of psychedelic Space Rock, we feature true time traveler Steve Hillage. Out in front, the most established electronic dance duo on the planet, Orbital. From the birthplace

are friends

ELECTRIC?

orbital ± system 7 ± percy howard

by Robert Phoenix

In lay terms, it represents a shift from a third-dimensional experience that reverberates physicality, to a fourth dimensional lattice that recreates physicality. It's the new space music, not because it conjures up images of nebulae and novas (though it can) but because the creation of the music itself takes place in (cyber) space. Even the way the music is performed marks the beginning of different resonant relationships. The band itself is, in many ways, no longer the focal point—it's the people who are hearing the music who become the transducers of the experience.

of Techno, one of the original techno-terrorists from the Detroit scene, Carl Craig, and trance Atlantic contemporary, super

DJ turned sound sculptor, Speedy J. No true exploration of a genre would be complete without contrast, so we drafted neo-romantic, dark-ambient balladeer, Percy Howard of Nüs to provide a poetic treatise against the foisting of another market trend upon us. And when it came to the concept and design, we turned this section over to the distant hands of 4AD recording artists, Iceland's own GusGus, doing their version of the ambient image re-mix.



±Orbital

photo by Tom Pitts

It was at the annual Green Christmas bash, KITS' seasonal industry gush fest. It was a time of transitions, Fall to Winter, '96 to '97 and so on. But the transitions went deeper. Allen Ginsberg was there, giving one of his last public readings to a throng of post-Xers who had no idea who he was or what he was raving about. On the same stage from which a weakened Ginsberg valiantly howled, Beck led cheers of "Loser" to the same legion that would recite it as if it were their generational mantra. From "Howl" to "Loser." Little did we know that the torch of the fools laureate would be passed that night from the Lion For Real to the Crown Prince of Drip-Hop. But that's another story.

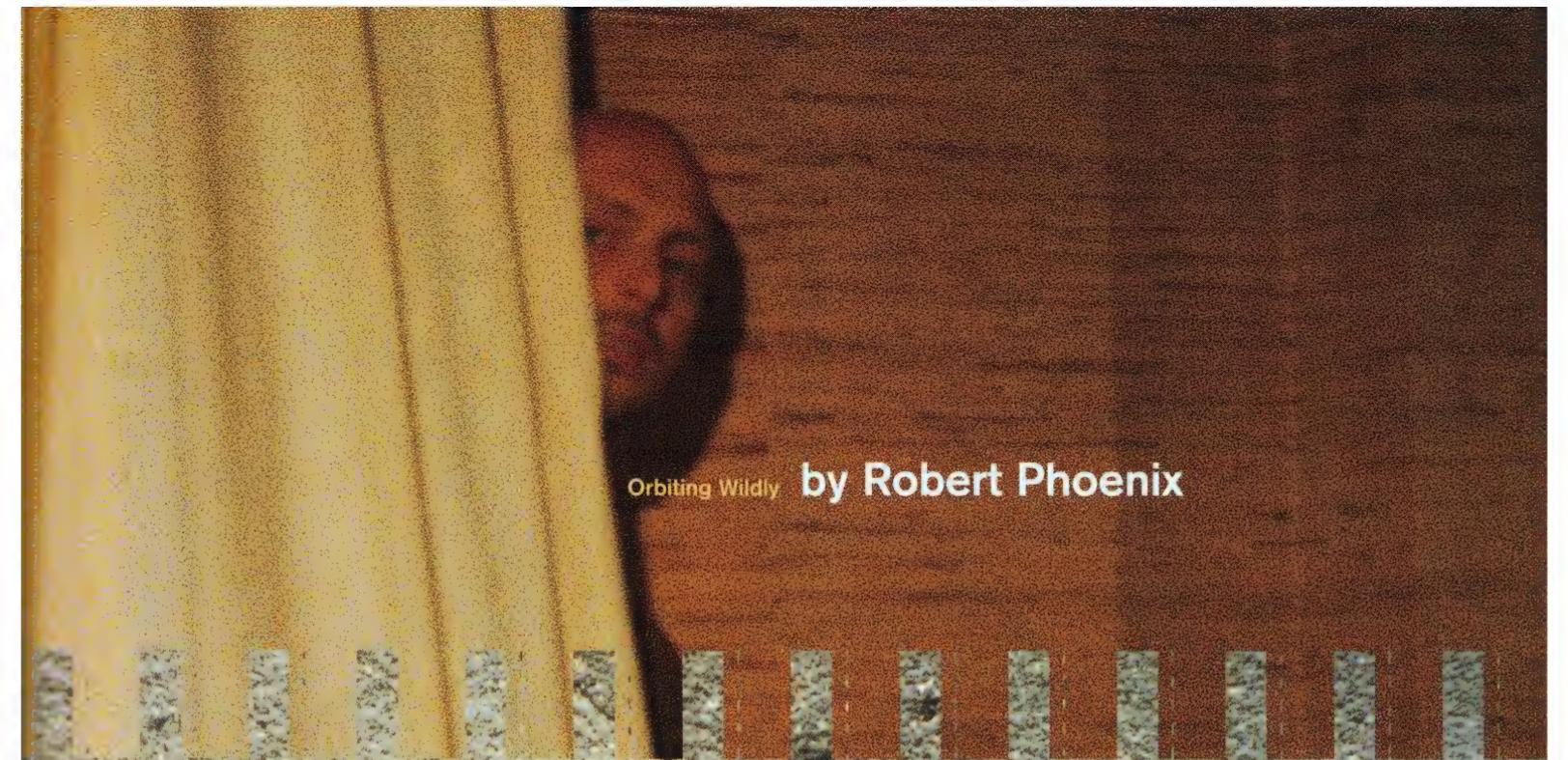
There was another transition taking place. A commercial path was being paved by the industry to the gates of Electronica. The Chemical Brothers were headlining and Orbital was sandwiched between Republica (themselves semi-electronica) and Cake. The lone representative of alternative's old guard that night was Evan Dando's Lemonheads who seemed as though they had squeezed every last drop out of the genre. They flailed and thrashed around in what had all the appearances of their own ignominious last waltz.

About an hour later, Orbital mounted the darkened stage, illuminated only by their bug-light headbands. They launched into their MTV-hit "The Box" and the stage came alive with strobes, swing lights and huge dual screens that flashed rapid fire images in unison. The Brothers Hartnoll bobbed and weaved behind their consoles like mischievous little zetans, tweaking and twiddling surging séquences and bone jarring basslines. Twenty years ago this would've been disco and Orbital might've been Moroder or Patrick Cowley, confined to Gay nightclubs or decadent Euro-trash parties hosted by

the likes of Khashoggi. Now they were at the Cow Palace where the teen-chattel had been herded to sample the next big thing. The kiddies went nuts for it, especially when Orbital performed "Satan" (imagine that). The powers that be said, "let there be Electronica" and there was. It was as if a switch had been thrown and the power rerouted from the Lemonheads, and their alternative current, to Orbital and the next generation. It was eerie.

Earlier in the day, we met with the Hartnoll brothers and talked about the surge of Electronica and their role in the new music for the masses.

I think that it's quite frightening that there's thirteen civil wars



Orbiting Wildly **by Robert Phoenix**

M2: What's the difference between the crowds at the Greenfest Glastonbury and the crowds at Organic? [*a summertime rave in the California desert*]

Phil: Organic was more of a rave. Glastonbury is a totally different thing. They have three stages and a kids' area where they have attendants and you all just chill out. It's a whole different vibe. It's like an instant village, instant town, for about three days. Up on the top they have the mystic area, that's where all the green is.

M2: I've been to the Tor.

Phil: Oh yeah, it's quite mystical. I really think that something's happening up there.

M2: Was there an inherent difference in the crowd—between Organic and Glastonbury?

Paul: It was different. At Glastonbury, people hang around for thirty-six hours, sort of enjoying themselves—indulging in whatever form or fashion. Very different from people piling up from the city and going to this place in the mountains.

Phil: Organic was just like an electronic music festival and Glastonbury has different types of music, jazz, films—it's much different. They're not ravers.

Paul: That's the big difference isn't it? At Glastonbury, there's 60,000 people, all sorts of people and Organic is pretty much 7,000 dance music fans.

M2: Well, that must have been a huge honor to close the show at Glastonbury.

Both: Yeah, it was good.

Phil: It was the first time we did it. It was a big blag. Björk was headlining and Leftfield was supposed to go on just after her, but they canceled. We got wind of it and sent her loads of stuff. We just wanted to round things up. She said "fine" before all the agents got

involved. She said "yeah." And it was great because then the agents got involved and they all wanted to push their acts.

M2: You guys played Woodstock 2, didn't you? How was that different than Glastonbury?

Phil: Yeah, Woodstock was shit actually. Not being too rude about it. There was no beer on site. People were wandering around with signs that said "give me acid—I want drugs." It wasn't a drug thing though—it was more of a spirit.

Paul: Whereas at Glastonbury people walk around saying "Do you want some acid?" "Do you want some cannabis?" Not "I need magic mushrooms now!"

Phil: It was a pigs from Coke festival. That's what it was. The fact that you had to exchange your money for Woodstock money when you got there...

M2: There was actually Woodstock money?

Paul: Yeah, a lot of festivals in Europe do the same thing actually. I don't really like it, I think it's sort of poncy. All the food and drink stands are identical to each other. You exchange your money for tokens and you can go and buy a burger. I just don't like it. But then I've been spoiled by going to Glastonbury since I was eighteen, thinking that that's what all festivals are like.

Phil: In our experience, Glastonbury is quite unique, unlike a lot of European festivals.

Paul: Ross Guild is the closest thing, but that's a much more major sort of alcohol festival.

Phil: Woodstock wasn't bad in a sense because they had this stage totally dedicated to Electronic music—it was a good showcase for that. I don't want to dis it too much in that respect. It was even more than Glastonbury was doing. They weren't even acknowledging that electronic music existed actually. They only had a couple of weeks

going on right now, it's totally outrageous. So called civilization!

to set it up and it was a little peripheral stage. Obviously people came there for the heavy rock and moseyed on over and they could just see what it was about.

Paul: Yeah, there was a lot of curiosity...

Phil: It was good in that sense, but the overall festival was...

Paul: But the idea that people would get their bottle of Jack Daniels taken from them at the gate was really daft. It takes the word festive out of festival.

Phil: I mean a festival is a big excuse to go sit in a field and hear a few bands, get drunk a bit and smoke a little. It's just what happens isn't it? But to have a festival without alcohol seemed a bit desperate. It was a very commercial point.

M2: It seemed like a bad idea to begin with... Of everybody in the genre, you two are easily some of the most recognizable with your shaved pates, I mean I think that it would be a lot easier to point you two out, than say Future Sound of London.

Phil: [to Paul] We don't get recognized too much do we? At KROQ yesterday you wandered about backstage, straight through, nobody says anything.

M2: Is it true that Mixmaster Morris shaved his head in order to join Orbital? [laughs]

Paul: I don't think he's ever had long hair, I think he's been born with a crop.

M2: Were you guys into "Progressive Rock", "Gentle Giant", early Genesis?

Phil: Genesis when I was young. My brother was into it and you always listen to your brother's records. Kraftwerk, Autobahn and things like that. I remember when I first listened to "Autobahn." It was the first concept album that I listened to where you turned it over and it kept going.

M2: Could you see yourselves working with Diamanda Galas, dropping her voice into something?

Phil: Yeah, totally. Make some sort of horror thing. Very gothic. The things that she does are amazing. A mate of mine used to live with her in London. She's really pretty nice. You wouldn't think it if you saw her on stage, fucking hell.

M2: I don't know, sometimes people have stage personas and they're really different off stage. In fact, there are athletes that have reputations as killers on the field and off the field they're extremely nice. They compartmentalize.

Paul: Well, everybody needs an outlet don't they? The nastiest people tend to be the ones that don't have an outlet.

M2: I think they become cops. [laughs] What about Bowie, has he ever contacted you to do any work with him?

Both: Yeah.

Phil: He has, uncannily enough, to do a re-mix for a record he's got out. But I don't know if we've got time to do it.

Paul: Just in the last year we've had to turn down all re-mixes. I enjoy doing this and don't want to end up in a panic situation. It becomes muddy and unclear. I can't do a re-mix in two days. We're not a factory production team. We've done re-mixes in the past and they've taken two weeks. But to lose two weeks out of the Orbital thing would be too much—we like to go at a relaxed pace.

M2: Well, it seems like it would be a great match. When I listen to some of the stuff on Low, I hear bits and pieces of Orbital.

Phil: I've always been a big fan. He's just done a load of stuff with A Guy Called Gerald as well.

Paul: Is he doing the old stuff?

Phil: I think it's gonna be.

Paul: I think that'll be really good. A Guy Called Gerald is one of the people who makes music that you can listen to anywhere.

M2: How much did the Manchester sound influence Orbital?

Paul: Oh, I think that early 808 State and A Guy Called Gerald are the most influential of the British House scene. Things like "Voodoo Ray" and the first 808 State record when A Guy Called Gerald was with them.

M2: You guys don't record under any pseudonyms do you?

Both: No.

Paul: If we did, I wouldn't tell you. [snickers]

M2: Switching gears, what's your take on the influx of information about Mars, with the rock that had organisms on it, Mars Attacks, ID4 and so on?

Phil: I've heard about it vaguely, the organisms.

Paul: Is there actually an organism?

M2: Our Science Editor (Charles Ostman) said that the British have had the evidence for twelve years.

Paul: How do the British have it when they don't even have their own rocket?

M2: They had the sample from a meteorite.

Paul: Was it alive?

Phil: No! It was a fossil.

M2: So there's all this material around Mars, can you guys see any connection?

Paul: It's a bit weird because there's this atmosphere going around. The aliens are going to be nice, they're going to come save us. I saw this really interesting documentary about UFOs, not evidence, but how people are about UFOs. Sort of a fifties sort of religious cult, like the Church of Uriel, that believe the aliens are going to come and save us.

Phil: She's got this theory that thirteen spaceships are going to rescue us. There're loads of people following her and giving her money.

Paul: The weird thing is that she has people following her. There's loads of organizations like that, that wear smocks like Freemasons and wear power converters and things like that. I find it all fascinating. Call it Jesus... Lucifer... it's just religion basically... having faith in something.

Phil: It tends to fill out that the aliens are going to save us. Take me. Experiment on me. It tends to fill a void really.

Paul: I wonder if these people take notice of things like cattle mutilations?

Phil: All this sort of stuff feeds that. I really feel like it fills a spiritual void. Some people get so obsessive about it.

Paul: I like to entertain the theory that the US government is holding all the info. It becomes the joke in every alien film about Area 51. The thing that I like about that is that it goes along with every sort of conspiracy theory. Basically it's like the powers that be—the government—is slowly letting it out and it's going to come out in the open soon. Instead of saying "Oh, by the way, we've known about this for the last thirty years now and they're not very nice. We're going to have to tell you now because they're coming, they're starting to let people know about it gradually. Then out come these films, *Independence Day*, *Mars Attacks*, aaahhh!

M2: Then there's Contact.

Paul: Yeah. See, it's almost like we're being prepared.

M2: What about crop circles? Have you guys seen any of them?

Paul: Yeah! I went out to investigate them a quite a few years ago. Someone said to me that there's these crop circles and my mind

went back to when I was seven or eight remembering them in the paper then. Do you remember them? They said that they must have been the footprint of a spaceship. I said "Oh, they're back again." It was Friday night and I said "c'mon let's go," so we went down to the west country, Wiltshire. There was a big one there. Someone showed me a photograph; it was that pictogram thing that ended up on the Led Zeppelin record cover. I said "fuckin' hell, that's pretty mad." So we went down there. We spent the night there on top of Silbury Hill with a blanket and a bottle of Vodka and Orange. Just waiting to see if anything happened.

Phil: If it did, you would have drunk too much.

Paul: Somebody disappeared for a half hour and we were wondering if she'd been abducted. We go to the top of this hill and there were already people there. They had photographic equipment and Indiana Jones hats—they sat there waiting. And there was this bunch of rockers sitting there with their bottles. The whole countryside was alive with people in cars and people walking into these circles swaying, saying: "I can feel the power. I can feel the power!" We met this bloke from Montreal—he had his shirt off, long hair, big beard, a young bloke—he just sat there smiling. He stood at the top of the hill saying "it's so great"—just like Jesus of Montreal on the top of the hill. Then this bloke is walking past us, looking like Lionel Jeffreys, the Great White Hunter—David Attenborough costume, with these two divining rods, waving them in front of Jesus, yelling "it's alive, the whole place is alive with energy!"

M2: Even now and then we have a crop circle that shows up in the United States, but they're never as good as the ones in Britain. You guys get all the good crop circles. [laughter]

Paul: Well, I know a lot of people who make them themselves. There's no way that they're all kind of this mystical thing. There's too many people hoaxing now for me to be interested in them anymore.

M2: Do you guys have a favorite conspiracy theory?

Paul: Yeah, I'm hooked up to some kind of table somewhere with just electrodes and this isn't my life at all. That someone will unplug me and I'll be this big slimy blob or something.

M2: If you could play any place in the world, a place that you haven't played, where would it be?

Paul: Area 51!! [laughter] I don't think anyone would turn up though.

M2: You'd be surprised.

Paul: There'd be some strange clientele.

M2: Are you guys into the X-Files?

Paul: I catch it now and then. I think it's on the wrong time of day for me.

M2: Is it still popular in England?

Both: Yeah, yeah.

Phil: I'm more of a Next Generation fan.

M2: Did you guys get into those puppets on TV? I think it was ITC?

Paul: You mean Gerry Anderson?

M2: I was totally into them.

Phil: International Rescue!

Paul: Capt. Scarlet, Thunderbirds, Fireball XLV, Stingray...

M2: Were you guys into it?

Phil: Yeah, big time.

M2: I've talked to contemporaries who just couldn't get into the puppet thing.

Phil: It's funny because International Rescue was based on Americans.

Paul: Ex-astronauts, Jeff Tracey...

Phil: And Brains, [in sixties American geek-speak] "gee, gee, gee." To us it was foreign. It's like American culture used to represent the future, or coolness. It was the sort of element that the Americans represent the future.

M2: When I was a kid, I went to the 1964 World's Fair in New York where everything was the future. Monsanto was there, Ma Bell, Kodak, GM and the all rest. It was like, "this is the future, the future that's coming. We're going to bring it to you. Just take this pill and everything will be groovy." That was thirty-two years ago and the future is now but it doesn't look that great.

Phil: That's a lot of what we did on "Snivilization"—take a lot of things out of reality that you think would be from another time, like adverts for breast augmentation.

Paul: It's like those plastic surgery adverts we listened to that sounded just like the adverts from *Blade Runner*—"Off World Colonies!—Breast augmentation is now simple and safe! ... Eyes, nose, ears, whatever you want—come to the Grosvenor Clinic".

Phil: These sorts of things weren't around when we were younger. You couldn't imagine these things. So it is like the future is now. It's scary, it's not a pleasant place. I think that it's quite frightening that there's thirteen civil wars going on right now. We still have things such as third world countries. It's totally outrageous. So called civilization! **ME**

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±Carl Craig, Techno-Don

Of Subotnick, food and revolutionary art by Robert Phoenix

Carl Craig exploded onto the techno scene with the massively influential "Bug in the Bassbin" when he was twenty-three. Since then, he's recorded under the pseudonyms of Paperclip People and Psyche/BFC. His remixes are sought out by the likes of Steve Hillage, Depeche Mode, Space Time Continuum and others. His re-mix of Can's "Future Days" on the Sacrilege record took the original masterpiece into new and rarified realms. Along with Kevin Saunderson, Derrick May, Juan Atkins, Mike Banks and Kenny Larkin, the techno-dons from Detroit, he is one of the most sought after performers/DJ's on the planet. He put out his first twelve-inch at twenty and at twenty-eight his latest album, *Songs About Food and Revolutionary Art* on Planet E, reveals that he's reached levels of his craft that transcend the labels of techno or dance music. Much in the same way that Howlin Wolf and Muddy Waters inspired the sounds of the Yardbirds and the Stones, Craig too has influenced an entire generation of young Euro-DJ's and producers. The beat goes on.

He'd just returned from the Tribal Gathering Festival in England where everyone eagerly awaited the return of the gods of Electronica: Kraftwerk. At Tribal Fest, while the faithful waited to hear his trademark grooves, bleeps and beats, Craig, in the tradition of the trickster, played coyote and messed with some minds—bringing along jazz players performing as the Interzone Orchestra to jam with him in the Detroit tent.

Stateside, his own Planet E, the Detroit-based label, has hooked up with Caroline for a larger distribution deal. With it comes the attendant responsibilities of running a label, while maintaining his artistic aspirations.

While the Red Wings were poised to capture the Stanley Cup, Craig took time out from one of his high-powered days as record don-in-training to ruminate on the current state of Electronic Music, Cap'n Crunch (the cereal, not the hacker) and the Spooky vs. Tricky debate.

Craig answers the phone and puts me on hold, comes back and answers again. This is where we pick up the interview.

M2: You're a busy man.

Craig: Sometimes I'm busy with business, sometimes I'm busy with bullshit muthafuckas. Ya know what I'm sayin'?

M2: I think so. How was the Tribal Gathering Festival in England?

Craig: Yeah, it was good. The festival was quite large and they had crazy tents that probably fit a thousand, fifteen hundred people. Our tent maxed out at around twelve hundred. It was hype—a whole Detroit line-up.

M2: Did you guys play separate sets, together, both?

Craig: Kevin came on, then Juan came on, so we had our own sets. We did Interzone Orchestra which is my electronic jazz conglomerate. Some people it went over their heads and other people really got into it. I heard some good reviews.

M2: Who plays with you in that line-up?

Craig: Francisco Mora. He played percussion with the Sun Ra Arkestra and he did some writing with Max Roach. And Rodney Whitaker who plays bass with the Marsalises, Yusef Lateef and Bob James.

M2: Those are some pretty heavy cats.

Craig: Very heavy, especially with my light weight behind bein' with them.

M2: [laughter] Did you get a chance to check out Kraftwerk?

Craig: No, we had missed a flight and got into London a day late. So our sound check happened at the same time that Kraftwerk played.

M2: Any feedback on how they went over?

Craig: Mixed. Mixed feedback. Some people were really excited about it. Other people thought that it was too stiff. They did a lot of the old tracks, but also did a new track that was a little ravey or something.

M2: If there was ever a time for the godfathers of electronic music to re-emerge, it would be now.

Craig: Are they the godfathers or the grandfathers?

M2: Maybe the grandfathers. Who would be the godfathers of electronic music?

Craig: Maybe I shouldn't say grandfathers, they're the fathers of it. The grandfathers would be Subotnick and, and...

M2: Stockhausen.

Craig: Yeah, the people from the earlier days and that kinda stuff. Kraftwerk and Eno and Philip Glass are more like the fathers. The godfather of techno is Juan (Atkins). In what context is a god-father really considered a godfather? Why did he come across being the godfather of techno? I really don't know what context to put it in. I would really call him the father of techno. He's the guy that pretty much got people around here started on the stuff. Because nobody else was doing that kind of stuff—he and Eddie 60.

M2: Cybotron Clear.

Craig: Cybotron, yeah.



If Spooky likes Wu Tang, or PE or Gary Numan or Mozart or Subotnick or whomever, then that's his prerogative

M2: Would you put Juan in the same category as Eno and Kraftwerk?
Craig: Yeah, virtually. His stuff was as influential on myself as well as the European cats that were doin' that kind of stuff. It's good that there was a local kid that was hittin' up on it. Even though he got a lot of his influence from whether it was Kraftwerk, Visage, Telex or whatever. He's still the father at least.

M2: Is the Electrifying Mojo the missing link? The Yefi of Techno?
Craig: For us, yeah. I used to mention Mojo in other articles but it kind of got a little boring. But Mojo was the teacher basically. He played music that was influential to us at that time, where the most creative parts of this stuff was goin' on, which was the late eighties and early nineties. He was hittin' up all different sorts of music: playin' Kraftwerk, playin' Parliament, playin' Prince, Peter Dinklage, *Star Wars* themes. He was just this crazy whacked out cat. One of the things that helped him was that he went through the sixties thing and that whacked out fifties thing with Sun Ra, which was influential even though he didn't play it that much. Major labels were putting out some interesting shit compared to what they're putting out now. It kind of all helped out that Visage was making "Frequency 7." Nobody else in the world played that record except the Electrifying Mojo. When he was hittin' the stuff I was pretty young. Whereas Kevin, Derrick and Juan were closer to their teens.

M2: The whole Detroit sound/scene is so fascinating and in some ways bizarre. What about other artists who perform outside of a supposed cultural context like DJ Spooky?

Craig: I just heard a track of his and it was pretty hype.

M2: I asked you about him because he's an African-American artist who creates music outside of the genres that have been assigned to him by the industry, the culture and even the press—much like yourself in some ways. He also has a fair amount of

social theory that goes along with his stuff and that has caused both critics and fellow musicians, like Tricky to dis his intellectual approach. How do you feel about that?

Craig: I've had some concerto kinda muthafucka in New York analyzing my music and he was trying to figure out where I was coming from. But nobody has ever told me to do my music differently. If I say that I like Kraftwerk, some people would say, "why the fuck are you attributing black music to some sterile white music from Germany?" That's the way I am. Fuck anybody else. I'm makin' my music. When it comes to Spooky and Tricky, Fuck Tricky! People create from their experiences. White people who made rock and roll were influenced by Black music. And a lot of the rap and hip-hop stuff that's out now has been influenced by White music, "Sweet Dreams", Puff Daddy's hit with the Police re-make and so on. No matter where anyone gets their influences they shouldn't be dissed for it. If Spooky likes Wu Tang, or PE or Gary Numan or Mozart or Subotnick or whomever, then that's his own prerogative. I don't think anybody should dis him for that. They could dis him for his music per say—if they don't like that track, that means that they can't relate to it. But that doesn't mean that they should be sayin' shit about their process.

M2: How old are you?

Craig: Twenty-eight.

M2: In Astrology, there's an aspect called the "Saturn return." It happens between twenty-eight and thirty. It's when people can suddenly become serious with their lives—it can be grow-up time. Do you feel like this is a time when you're getting serious about your life, your career?

Craig: Maybe a little too serious. The thing that came out in the music before, what I've done in the past, is that I've had some type of humor. Me getting to this level of twenty-eight years old, is

quite a large feat, because a lot of people living in the urban areas of America never make it to twenty-eight without being picked up for drunk driving, or getting into a car wreck while loaded, or getting mugged or killed. It's something not to take lightly. I'm engaged and there's a little bit more of maturity that I see in it. But when I was a little more free loving, anything goes. I played more. My ideas weren't set in stone. That's one of the problems of getting older is that you get restricted. I don't do drugs so I don't have any outlet to find some new type of fantasy or dream world.

M2: Besides him stepping out into fantasy dream world/drug world, Miles counteracted that by surrounding himself with young lions.

Craig: That wasn't until he was around fifty. I'm still young. But I'm surrounding myself with older cats. Francisco is fifty. Rodney's not that much older than me. He's around three years older than me—but these guys got the knowledge of decades with jazz music and stuff. Maybe that's what makes me similar to Miles, because Miles was goin' into the rock aspect. In this book he tries styles like Hendrix, he plays certain riffs on the trumpet to get that same kind of feel. I want to try to get the same type of feel as these pioneers of Jazz or Avant Garde music to the foreground now and make something new out of it. I'll have the education by the time I'm fifty; if I'm still doin' this by the time I'm fifty, and I can surround myself around the younger kids and I can give something to them which is young, spawning creativity. If I just tune myself into the youth culture then I'm not going to learn anything and be able to take something from the past into the future. It's only taking what's now into the future—which is what's fuckin' up the world right now anyway. I'm sorry, I just thought of something—can you hold on for just a sec?

At this point in the interview Carl has to deal with the minutiae of maintaining an indie label. He's ordered fliers and didn't get the right ones. He dissects his dilemma while on the phone with me for the next ten minutes.

Craig: *[under his breath]* Hello... this printer just came in... damn, I can't believe they didn't do this on gloss.
[medium sigh]

M2: The joys of running an indie label.

Craig: Pfffft! No it isn't a joy.

M2: It's tough work isn't it?

Craig: It's extremely tough work. We got a bunch of four color postcards done, not a shitload, like 2000. And they cost me like \$900.

M2: And they didn't do it on gloss.

Craig: And they didn't do it on gloss. Should I pay 'em or not?

M2: Pay 'em half.

Craig: Yeah, you think so?

M2: Or you could send them back and say, "do it again." That would be the way of the record mogul—right?

Craig: Yeah, I guess.

M2: And if they give you any heat, tell them they can talk with your lawyer.

Craig: I like that a lot.

M2: The new album *Songs About Food and Revolutionary Art* is terrific. What would you consider to be your most revolutionary food?

Craig: Hold it, hold it, hold it. Gimme two seconds again?

We break once again to deal with the pressing postcard dilemma. Craig negotiates with the printer while on the phone during the interview. His mogul-multi-tasking abilities grow exponentially with each moment.

Craig: Oh, I mean for what I'm paying now. How much more would that have cost if you would have run another thousand? Like a hundred dollars more or something? You still there?

M2: Still here.

Craig: Sorry, I'm just trying to figure it out. *[aside to his stuff]* You gotta do purchase orders and we gotta keep holding the quotes. Cause when I saw the price, I went whoa because we got a better price than we should have got which is cool. *[to the printer]* So how much more would it have been on gloss? What stock is this? Gimme a glass of water, I want to see how they can handle water—just in case it rains. But if Hannah *[Craig's partner and fiancée]* said to get these done then it makes sense. Do you think that we can actually mail these out and not have any problems? I got some mail last week and it was wet and nasty. *[more sighs]* What about these business cards? We need those done.

More words muttered beneath his breath, a minute's worth of unexpressed tension fills the phone line.

M2: Hey, Carl, are you okay?

Craig: Yeah, let's go with it.

M2: See how serious things are getting? Gloss or Flat?

Craig: Oh yeah. It's deep.

M2: So where are these fliers going?

Craig: To stores and stuff—anybody and everybody.

M2: When you come right down to it, the music industry is not all that glamorous. Hell, it could be shoes or shavers that you're moving. It's just a product isn't it? A lot of people think it's glamorous.

Craig: I agree that people do look at the record industry and say that you gotta a lot of fuckin' money and shit. You know what I'm sayin'! It's just a little too predictable. I just wish that we could find a way to work without the bullshit in the middle.

M2: That's the glitch. Getting back to the food question, "What's the most revolutionary food you've ever had?"

Craig: Cap'n Crunch.

M2: *[laughter]* Just straight-up Cap'n Crunch?

Craig: Yeah, Cap'n Crunch, that's my shit.

M2: I used to let it soak for a while until it was about three quarters sog to one quarter crunch. What about you? Is that your method or do you let your gums get shredded by that stuff?

Craig: I try to let it soak as much as I can. Soggy is hype.

M2: I used to hang with a guy in high school who thought of marketing just the milk left over from the Cap'n Crunch.

Craig: That would be so hype. Cap'n Crunch milk, Frosted Flake milk and even Shredded Wheat milk with two teaspoons of sugar. That's totally hype. It is definitely on.

M2: Maybe that could be a whole new line of Planet E? You could sell the stuff at raves. Instead of smart drinks, you could have dumb drinks.

[laughter all around]

Craig: Planet E Cap'n Crunch milk.

M2: That's it. Forget the record business Carl—too much of a hassle.

Craig: I like that. **M2**

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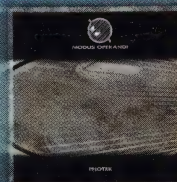
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tranceparent***

From Hatfield North, to Gong and System 7, Steve Hillage has moved and shifted with the trends and times unlike almost any other contemporary from his period. He and fellow time traveler Miquette Giraudy have just released their latest CD, *Golden Section*, on Hypnotic Records. We caught up with Steve while he was working on *Golden Section* at Rollover Studios in London. Over the course of the following hour we skipped around from the surprising roots of techno, to the latest buzz in London, to the potential of technology to rapidly effect a collective psychic breakthrough. Here are the highlights of the trance-Atlantic exchange.



±System 7 & Steve Hillage by Robert Phoenix

M2: Steve,

Steve: Hello.

M2: So, where is Rollover Studios?

Steve: Rollover is in West Central London in Notting Hill. It's quite a well-known studio, especially for dance music. We did *Power of Seven* and *System Express* here and Leftfield record here.

M2: How do you create your remixes? Do you fly a Richie Hawtin in to work on the tracks or do you just send him the DAT?

Steve: The remixes on *System Express* is a compilation of some mixes we had already done for some of our singles. Over in Europe

we're actually well known for being a club singles group as well as an album group. We generally send the mixes out, like we did with Richie. But we mixed the whole album together DJ style, using CD mixing decks which is why it has that nice sequential feel to it.

M2: What about Carl Craig's participation?

Steve: On *System Express* we didn't use a Carl Craig mix, we had a mix that he did as a bonus track that came out in the UK. As regards to the track we did with Carl Craig on the *Power of Seven*, we actually went over to Detroit and did it there.

M2: How does actually being in place like Detroit, just physically alter or shape what you're doing musically?

Steve: Well, Detroit's a very special place, I mean it's been a special place for music before the techno era, with Motown, and particularly with something that's had a massive influence on us,

and on the development of dance music. It's where George Clinton and Funkadelic came from.

M2: You're a big Parliament fan aren't you?

Steve: Oh yeah! The particular musical development that happened in Detroit obviously paralleled what was happening in Chicago—one of the most interesting and important musical events in over the last fifty years. There you had a sort of number of young black kids growing up who were totally inspired by groups like Kraftwerk, which is amazing when you really think about it. It goes against white liberal stereotyping of funky black culture, while at the same time they were still into things like Clinton. In fact, Carl Craig and Derrick May both have a lot of respect for Bernie Worrell who played keyboards in Parliament and Funkadelic.

M2: When you cut a track in a place like Detroit, is there sort of a totemic feel of the place that actually begins to inform the sound of the record, say as opposed to someplace like Rollover?

Steve: Oh sure, that's why we went over there. We went and visited Richie Hawtin in Windsor, Ontario and we met one particular person who had a great effect on us and that was Mike Banks of the group Underground Resistance. He's like the Don Corleone of the techno movement—he's one gentleman who stayed in Detroit rather than deejaying all over Europe. He's someone that's looked up to as a very important person. Another thing that I discovered that was really interesting was why the extraordinary musical fusion occurred in Detroit in the mid-eighties. Derrick and Carl told me that they were very influenced by a radio DJ called The Electrifying Mojo who used to have a radio show in the late seventies and he was also a poet.

He supposedly played a lot of European electronic music and mixed it with Clinton's sounds. So in a way he's one of the fathers of techno music: The Electrifying Mojo. Detroit's a special place. It's an extreme example of a post-industrial future city. It's like a sort of bomb site—it's quite deserted. It's got steam coming out of the road and has a sort of Blade Runners feel to it. I find that really inspiring. Maybe two-thousand years ago it was an ancient sacred center for the North American Indians. You don't know.

M2: If you think about all of the cars that they've produced there, and the whole idea of the soul of the machine, that it could have a sort of mechanistic influence over the land...

Steve: There's a famous quote from Derrick when he was asked in an interview about what he thought about Motown and he said that "he wasn't really interested in Motown music at all." What really interested him about Motown was "the robots in the motor factories"—it kind of relates to what you were saying.

M2: That's why they dug Kraftwerk, because they were the perfect motor city band!

Steve: That's one of the many reasons why Detroit is a special place in the history of Techno and Electronic music. One of my real hopes is that—if it finally becomes as major a part of the American music scene as it evidently has been in Europe for the last six or seven years—that it's recognized as something that very much started in America. But it's been obviously developed and mixed with other cultural streams in the UK and Europe. In

Steve: Well, that's a great compliment. That's exactly how we'd like to be seen. The essential members of System 7 are myself and Miquette. We basically have our own sound, but we really like to collaborate with people. One of the reasons that people like Derrick May and Carl Craig like working with us is that we have our own sound and it gives them a new palette to work with. And the way we use the guitar and the keyboards gives our music a special quality, especially during the live show.

M2: You've shifted and mutated through a lot of different movements and sounds. How have you been able to stay so fluid while many of your contemporaries have fallen off the map?

Steve: I'd like to turn that question around and ask why they haven't been able to do it. It's been a natural journey for Miquette and I—starting with progressive music and coming out the other end with midi-sequencers and drum machines. I can't understand why more progressive artists haven't made the same journey—it's really a mystery to me. I don't really worry that much about it. The most important thing is to be in the here and now, to be hungry and to keep learning. Some of the people that we collaborate with are our teachers.

M2: Do you have any children?

Steve: NO.

M2: Was that a conscious choice or just how it worked out?

Steve: How it worked out.

This music is the soundtrack to the information revolution

the UK we have the original factor of Dub and Reggae which has had a tremendous influence over techno as well. But what happened in Detroit was really special. And I'd like to think that the originators of Techno from Detroit and Chicago would get their rightful recognition in their own country. I don't think it's happened yet but I hope it does.

M2: What's happening musically right now in London?

Steve: In London the dance music scene has many different styles—sub-cultures within the whole dance music movement. Dance music itself is bigger than ever. It's become a really major thing. Most of the experimental stuff is in the drum and bass area—artists like Photek and Source Direct are coming out with amazing stuff and it's influencing everybody. One interesting development is a movement spearheaded by a young tabla player named Talvin Singh (Massive Attack, Björk, Skip Macdonald, etc.). He's started his own club called Anokha where they mix tablas and Indian music with Jungle and Drum and Bass and it's fantastic. It's having a massive effect on the scene. David Byrne was there last night and Afrika Bambaataa was there earlier too. It's actually a new sound—very exciting. I've known Talvin for a few years and have collaborated with him on *Golden Section*. Trance is very big here and there's a club in London that System Seven has played at called Escape From Samsara, a really wonderful club that has a fantastic vibe.

M2: One of the things that I've always enjoyed about System 7 is the heart and soul of trance music that you guys create. It doesn't sound like any number of mind numbing trance tracks that make it to my CD player.

M2: I'm sure that there's a bit of a difference in your age and in the age of some of the artists that you work with in dance music. Do you see yourself taking on a mentor or surrogate dad role?

Steve: [laughter] A friend of mine said to Miquette and me the other day that we were his "trance" parents and I said "Tranceparents?" And he said "No. Like parents." [more laughter] No, the age thing is not really as much of a factor in the UK as in other parts of the world. There's some people who are my age in the dance movement and there are some incredibly young people, around nineteen and twenty, especially in the drum and bass movement. There's this young guy named Andy C who goes by the name Origin Unknown and he's been making music since he was fourteen. He's responsible for a massive jungle hit that broke in 1994. I used to hear it at clubs and didn't know it was him. He must have been sixteen! Maximum respect to Andy C.

M2: This does seem to be an incredible time, where a sixteen-year-old with a sense of excitement, fresh ears, a sampler and a Mac could have an impact on the dominant culture. There has truly never been a time like this when the collective was so accessible.

Steve: Making dance music has a technical aspect to it. There are certain tools and techniques within the studio that have a fairly uniform function throughout the various forms of dance music. Once you learn these techniques there's the whole parallel aspect of interest in the internet, global communication, a general sort of shared looking at the way things are changing.

M2: I think that the dance movement is really endemic to the U.K. or other parts of Europe where the space that contains the scene is a lot smaller than the U.S. And things tend to heat up rather quickly. Whereas here this country is so big and diffuse that we may have a center or two, but no real epicenter like London or Berlin.

Steve: Certainly there's a definite parallel between what's happening with dance music now and in the sixties with the Stones—the influence on their music by Muddy Waters, who wasn't really popular at all in America. But the Stones were able to recreate it in such a way that he was able to eventually get more recognition in his home country. I'm hoping that the same thing will happen to techno artists in America. I think America and England have a deep relationship, this tennis game we have across the Atlantic. How America and Britain feed off each other is important to world culture.

M2: Do you think dance music will ever catch on in the States?

Steve: I'd like to think that it would work out in a parallel way in America. It's one of the most computerized societies in the world and—without trying to sound too glib—this music is the soundtrack to the information revolution. It's music made by the same tools. I just can't imagine people sitting around on a Silicon Graphics machine, creating really advanced web-sites, and listening to the Grateful Dead. I can't possibly comprehend that that would be the case.

M2: Are you familiar with "synthetic sentence"? Thought recognition engines that literally model and program their own intelligence based on certain parameters that are programmed into the system. In essence they can do your thinking for you.

Steve: It could make a wonderful art form.

M2: Could you expand upon that a bit?

Steve: Purely off the top of my head. A lot of art is based on producing a feeling or an experience that the artist is trying to communicate with—in a software way—music you can smell and so on.

M2: Synaesthesia?

Steve: Yeah! Did you see *Brainstorm*? Going in that direction. We're really at the tip of an iceberg with all of this. I think it's going to effect our concept of time and space and parallel a more fluid and flexible way for people to process information. And as a byproduct people are going to become more psychic, or what used to be called psychic. I think that a whole new language will develop and people are going look at how we communicate, experience time and space, journey out of the body and so on. It's not going to happen next year, but within the next fifty years. This synthetic sentence doesn't scare me unless it would be developed to pit robots against us in a competitive way—which has always been a great fear.

M2: What about Prodigy getting five million to sign with Madonna's label?

Steve: Well, they deserve it. They're an amazing band. We know them quite well. We opened for them last year. I don't know if you've seen them live, but they're extraordinary. They're like a pure rush, humongous beats, and a strange theatrical routine that incorporates medieval burlesque theater. A very cathartic experience.

M2: Mummery on ecstasy, what'll they think of next? **M2**

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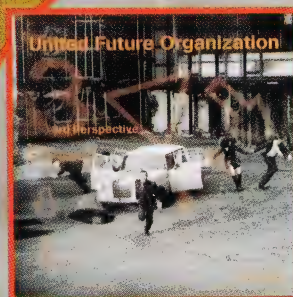
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Speedy J has just released Public Energy Number One. It's an attempt to bury an alter-ego—Public Energy—while taking his brand of intelligent techno into harder, darker, more ambiguous realms of listening. Two records ago, he was living in his parents' house in Rotterdam and cranking out seamless gems like "Pepper" and "The Fun Equations" both of which were head and shoulders above much of the average techno twaddle that dominated the early nineties. A turntable artist, Speedy J (aka Joachem Paap) went from the decks to the studio to hook up with Detroit's Plus 8 and later Warp Records. Part of the first wave of Electronica, along with Aphex Twin, Spacetime Continuum and others, he's still around for the next set.

Public Energy is filled with references of crop circles, abductions and mutilations. The cover itself is a computer enhanced image of a crop circle, not a real one. Paap doesn't necessarily believe they are what many people want them to be. And even though the titles of the pieces reference the crop circle phenomenon, he doesn't intend them to be statements. Crop circles like anything else are a point of departure for him. They might be signifiers or cyphers, but ultimately they're still question marks and the mystery is kept alive. One of Europe's techno superstars, his enigmatic quality is apparent. Unlike Mixmaster Morris, who can come off as the pope of ambient, or DJ Spooky, who is the embodiment of Baudrillard with an affinity for beats, Speedy J has no schemata, doctrine or social theory, just a keen appreciation of creation and the desire to keep things alive by refusing to name them.

±Speedy J

TRACKING PUBLIC ENERGY #1

by Robert Phoenix

My brain

M2: How's the new album doing?

J: I really don't know but response has been very good. I'm too busy touring.

M2: When you play live are you performing the newer material?

J: Yeah. It's based on the album, but I don't stay with the authentic songs. There are so many details that it's noticeable when you play stuff that loud. So I zoom in on the structures instead of trying to recreate everything. I think the essence of playing live is having control, being able to improvise and working the audience—tease them and give them what they want. Taking people to places they wouldn't normally go. A lot of this stuff is pretty inaccessible when you first hear it, but I try to present it in a way that it doesn't sound as inaccessible as it actually is. I try to lead them by starting with more accessible stuff and then leading them in a direction that they normally would say is too much.

M2: That's an old trick of the Masons. They would take initiates and give them a little bit at a time. Then 3, 4 or 5 years down the line, when they were more involved in the organization, they started to introduce some of the more insidious bits of their philosophy. But if they were to do that up front, those same people would walk out the door. Being Dutch, do you consider yourself a pilgrim of sound?

J: No. I don't consider myself anything. If I gave myself a title or described what I'm doing, I would say I'm a sound shaper. Shaping sound is the key thing I do, at least at the moment. I pay more attention to the way things sound and to structure than to melodies or rhythms. They're there to structure it or to make it audible, but the sounds are the key thing.

M2: How much influence did Mike Paradinas (muzik) have on this record?

J: None, because I wasn't familiar with his stuff when I was recording this album. I only got into his music after I was finished with the album. I finished it almost a year ago. When I first heard it, it really impressed me. In the meantime, I've become good friends with him. I've played a few gigs with him. I get along with him really well. And our girlfriends get along well too. There are so many similarities between us. Differences too, but there's something between us. We're close.

M2: You started off with a very controlled, very concise, very smooth sound on your first record, and when you got into *G Spot*, you started to let it go a bit—playing with rougher edges. And now with *Public Energy* you're getting more into the sculpting of the sound, which you talked about earlier. You went into a direction where you're not playing by the same rules as you did before, and not even playing by the rules that are really popular right now in terms of electronic music.

J: That's the approach I like to take. I think that's what music is about. Not repeating yourself and trying to find different solutions to the same questions. As soon as you explore something and find all the ins and outs of it, the magic is gone, and it doesn't make sense to repeat that. Because you know exactly which way you're going. So there's no surprises and no ambitions. At least for me it works that way. I can understand if people want to do something again, because it's safe. It's just not challenging. You're fooling yourself. Even if I listen to music, I like to listen to stuff I don't know. I'd rather put on some South American music that I totally don't understand and try to find what makes it tick rather than buy the latest techno record.

M2: Speaking of ethnic music, on the last track of *Public Energy*, you introduce a tabla sample. It starts off as a recognizable sound source, and then you mutate it in a way that it loses almost any recognition of where it comes from. I think that's an interesting example of taking something you heard from another piece or another culture and completely morphing it—something you create as your own.

translates sound into graphics. I've always been that way...

J: I think "Information" is a better example of South American influence—that's the fourth track—like the Indians (East) in the UK, that's the main foreign or ethnic culture; in Holland it's South American—not Jamaican—but from North and South America. There used to be a colony, a lot of people living in Rotterdam and in Holland in general. Ten percent of the population is black, coming from the colony. I think that's why I pick up some of the South American influences. The "Information" track is rhythmically inspired by South American music.

M2: You have a track, Tesla, on the new record. Are you a Tesla aficionado, in terms of free energy?

J: No, but all the titles on the album are associated with crop circles. I'm not a crop circle fan, but I think it's interesting. I've got this logo that a guy made for me. I just wanted to break away from the typical computer graphic artwork. I wanted to have a picture, like a strong photo with something wrong with it. And I wanted to have the logo in the artwork. So we decided to put the logo in the picture somehow. The only way we could think to do that was adding the logo into a cornfield—as a joke. The official story is that we actually went out and did that. But it's computer manipulated of course. Because of that idea I thought it was funny to get all the titles to be associated with the front cover. I got information on the internet about crop circles and cattle mutilation. Some of it is straight forward bullshit, but some of it is really interesting.

Same thing with UFOs. I'm not a total skeptic, but it's interesting.

M2: Based on the information that you disseminated, what would be your best approximation of what crop circles would be about?

J: They're about communication. I'm not going to guess who made them, although some I know are made by humans. There are all these phenomena about them—in snow with no footprints leading to them and stuff like that. It's a mystery and I'm not trying to find the answer. But in one way or another they are a communication tool. And some of them are very beautiful. They don't necessarily have to mean something. Even if it's meant to be communication, I don't think it's a language or something. I think they serve the purpose of getting a discussion going. It's one of those things that trigger questions about extra-terrestrial life or even life on earth. And why we're here. And are we alone? What are we doing here? For me, it's an interesting phenomenon. It's not about in 20 years we're all going to be rescued. Or the aliens are coming and this is the proof.

M2: So it seems you're not into the definitive—you're more amorphous in terms of how you like to have your information come to you and work with it. Is that true? You seem to not care so much about answers as you do about the energy of the question.

J: Yeah, I'm like that.

M2: Do you consider your music closer to numbers than words?

J: No, I think it's closer to graphics. I work from graphic ideas. I don't work from music. I don't get melodies or tunes in my head. If I hear a sound, I don't remember it from the way it sounds, but by the way it looks. My brain translates sound into graphics. I've always been that way. I'm not too interested in how it works; it's just a fact for me. And it works both ways. If I have an idea, it consists of texture, graphics, shapes, colors. It's something between an idea and a mood or feeling. That's how it starts. If I try to visualize it, it doesn't come close. If I translate into audio, it actually comes very close to what I was thinking graphically. I couldn't express the way it looks with words or visualization.

M2: It sounds like in that instance you're almost in the realm of architecture.

J: Yeah, that's true. Constructing.

M2: In the esoteric tradition of Alice Bailey, they talk about a certain type of music—I think it's architecture as frozen music.

J: Yeah. It's very static and very monumental.

M2: Speaking of architecture—this house of yours. If nobody had seen your house, how would you describe it?

J: It's a strange building. There's a road—one of the main roads through the city. And on the road there's a bridge. And on the bridge there are concrete branches. And on the branches is a tilted cube on an angle. The branches are all over the place, like a forest. And the cubes are all connected with sidewalls. And inside the branch is an entrance. And you go up one floor and there are living levels—with a living room and a kitchen, and my office as well. On the fourth floor there's bedrooms and a bathroom. And there are split levels. And the top floor is like a pyramid with three sides. Because if you put a cube on one side, it's not square, it's a triangle. It's disorienting having a house that's not square but consists of triangles. And the top floor is my studio. It's a nice place to live because it's not attached to other houses, but it's still in the city. It's a perfect place to work because I'm in the middle of a city and everything's going on, but I have a free standing studio.

M2: What do you think of the music industry's push for Electronica in this country? Will it catch on here?

J: I just heard about that. I didn't know that was going on. It's strange how the industry works. I'm not really in touch with how it works. I think it's good that some people are trying to open up some channels. But I think everyone should decide for themselves what they would like to listen to.

M2: Well, I think of Europe as a continent that's always looking forward in terms of the avant garde and something new.

J: I agree. It's just more fragmented, so it's moving quicker. The U.S. is so big ... before anything gets moving it's too late again. That's with everything, even with politics.

M2: It's like a big kid with ADD and too much leisure time.

J: If you're in a small country like Holland or Belgium, you're forced to look over the border. Seventy five percent of the TV is from the UK or the States or Australia. If you live in America, it's much more difficult to see what's going on in the rest of the world, because everything is going on there. Media in America looks at its own country, except for the news of course. You don't get any Dutch movies or German music or anything European in general. It's more difficult to find out about them. The channels are just not open.

M2: I spoke with Carl Craig last week, and one of the things we talked about was he's getting married; he's got his record company. And I said, "Carl, it looks like you're getting serious now." And in essence he said yes. He feels like there's this need in his life to start to curvy form. Are you feeling the same thing, or are you happy where you are right now, being not attached to where this journey's taking you?

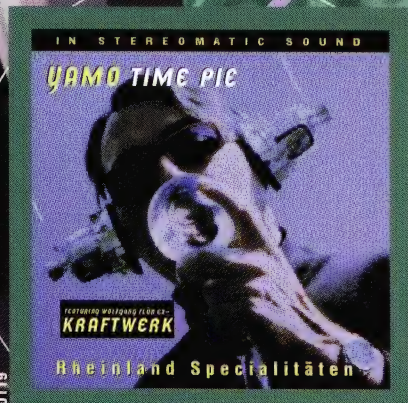
J: No, I think it's all starting now. I think I've been limited in what I can do for the last few years. I think I'm on the right track now for myself. In my music as well as my personal life. I'm developing and I'm not about to settle down at all. I think it's going to get crazier. **M2**

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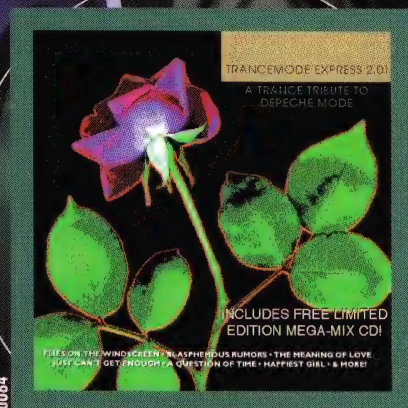
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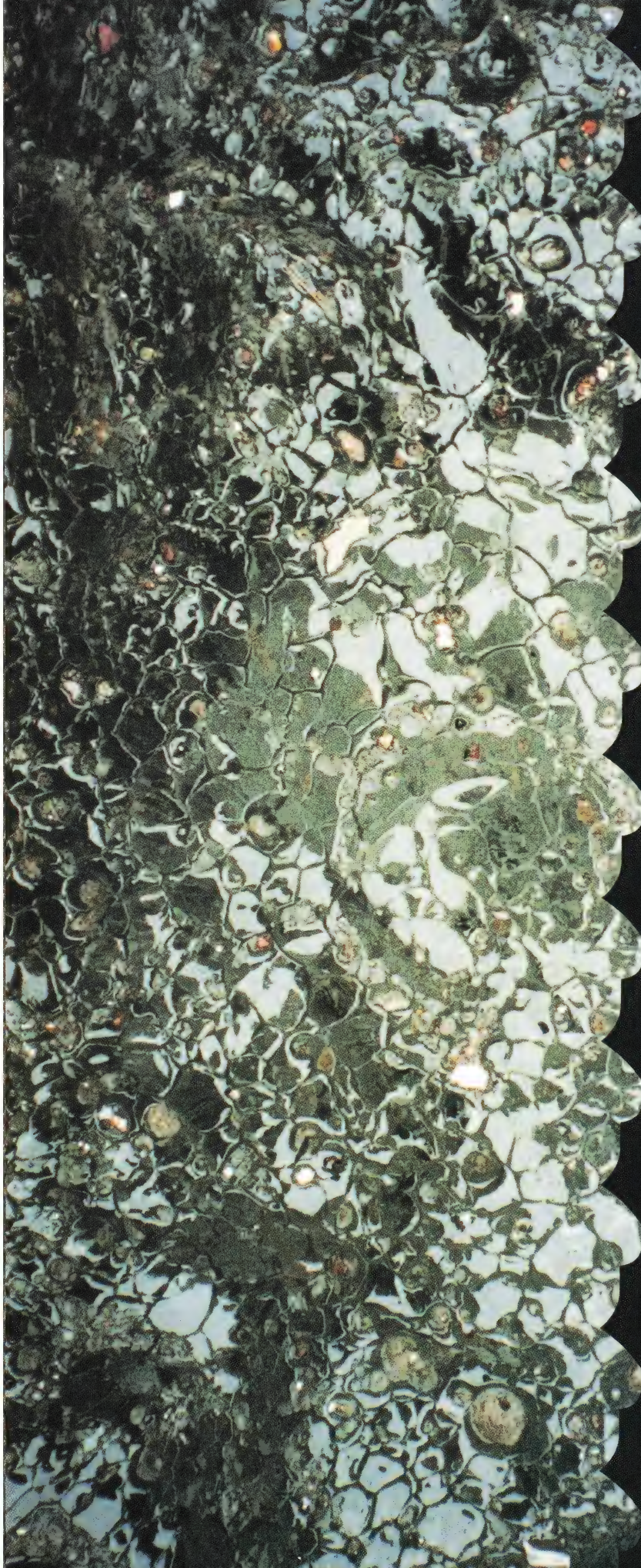


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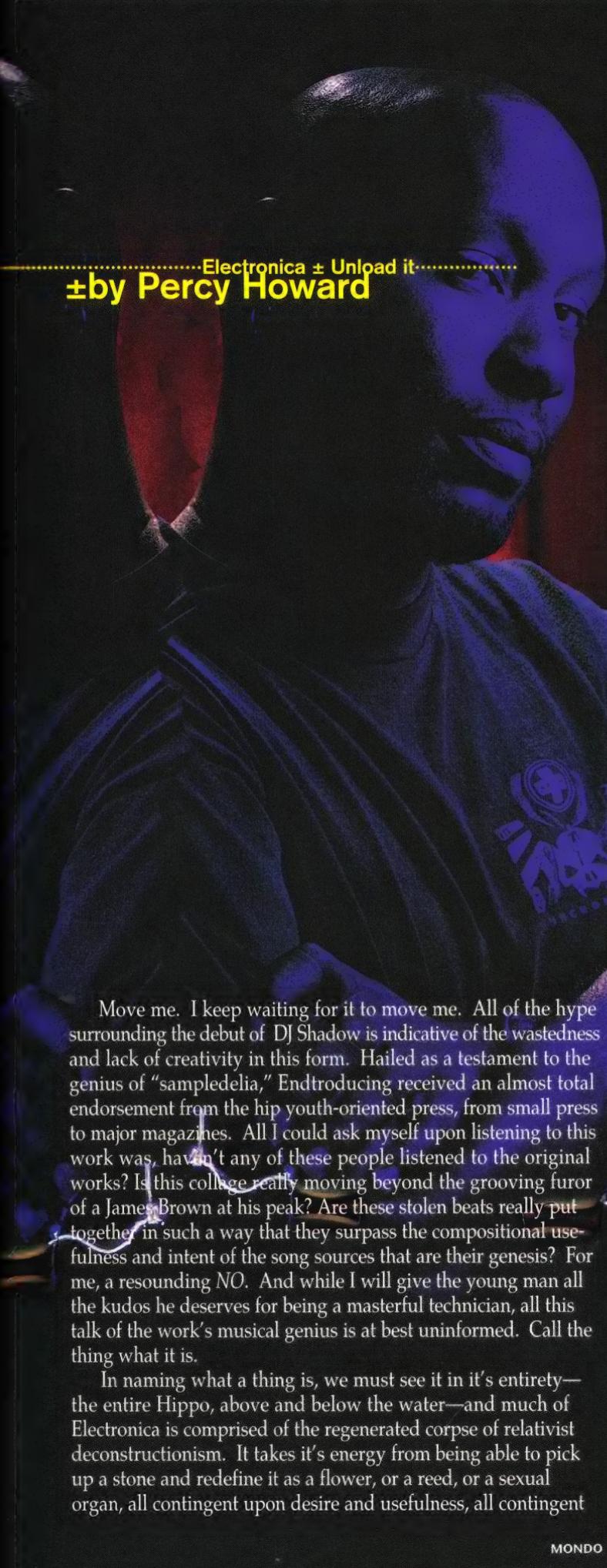


Lost in the white noise din of the millennium's end is the tradition of the troubadour, the creator of cantos and weaver of magical incantations. The troubadours have gone back underground to create their most potent magic, transforming the ephemera of the last days into ballads of alchemical discovery. Percy Howard, lead voice of the dark-ambient quartet Nûs, is one of the torch-bearers of this time-honored tradition. His voice speaks with insight on the creation of art without heart.

photo by Heide Foley

Cybernetic caresses, possessive of the clinical precision of a boy pulling the wings off a fly... too often Electronica enters my body with this type of energy and makes me ache, in my loins, in my heart, spleen and lungs for an immediate sonic breath of spirit.

There is a cure for the monotony of drum 'n' bass, for the linear, frameless void of aimless ambiance; for the cut and paste soul-lessness of "found sound" arrangements. It was in the reverberant soul of the angelic voicings of Jeff Buckley live, in the plaintive croonings of Cassandra Wilson, in the spare and destitute beauty of Michael Gira's *basso profundo*, in the controlled chaos of Crimson's double trio in full flight. If Electronica could move me so I would be both practitioner and disciple... But as this fashion stands now, all I see is the binary approximation of the human fingerprint, the kabuki mask worn by a geisha who does not wish to give herself to me. Intimacy. This is the key to the whole issue. Electronica is the ice queen, the Bond girl, the BMOC of the alternative youth culture machine, at least at the moment, and as such it is the perfect soundtrack to this Warholian culture, due it's proverbial 15 minutes.



.....Electronica ± Unload it.....
±by Percy Howard

Move me. I keep waiting for it to move me. All of the hype surrounding the debut of DJ Shadow is indicative of the wastedness and lack of creativity in this form. Hailed as a testament to the genius of "sampledelia," *Endtroducing* received an almost total endorsement from the hip youth-oriented press, from small press to major magazines. All I could ask myself upon listening to this work was, haven't any of these people listened to the original works? Is this collage really moving beyond the grooving furor of a James Brown at his peak? Are these stolen beats really put together in such a way that they surpass the compositional usefulness and intent of the song sources that are their genesis? For me, a resounding NO. And while I will give the young man all the kudos he deserves for being a masterful technician, all this talk of the work's musical genius is at best uninformed. Call the thing what it is.

In naming what a thing is, we must see it in its entirety—the entire Hippo, above and below the water—and much of Electronica is comprised of the regenerated corpse of relativist deconstructionism. It takes its energy from being able to pick up a stone and redefine it as a flower, or a reed, or a sexual organ, all contingent upon desire and usefulness, all contingent

upon an act of will. History, sensory perception, craft, all become subordinate to the will to redefine a thing. Holger Czukay (of the seminal electronic band Can) put it straight when he told *The Wire* one of his goals was to make music that was divested of any of the energy of things human, that he was seeking in effect the creation of a milieu that was completely based on the energy of artifice, and this is the very truth inherent in much of Electronica that spells its death knell, because the only people you are going to lead for very long with this particular carrot are the cool ones, the ones who will persist the longest in insisting that the naked king really is wearing a glittering suit.

The only viable future in Electronica is in fusion. It's been argued that many great Jazz musicians did their worst work when trying to fuse their art with progressive elements in rock and R&B. The Bitches Brew vs. Kind of Blue debate will be had by musicians and enthusiasts for years. However, much of what is at least promising in the wide universe of Electronica is what is being summoned on its outer fringes, by musicians of craft and heart who are not afraid to include those intimate, human elements of creation and performance that form an interactive human experience. Musicians such as Talvin Singh, William Orbit, Bill Laswell, The Grassy Knoll, etc., all recognize the necessity of alchemizing music that engages not just the loins and fashion sense, but the head and soul as well. It is no surprise to me that the most creative electronic musicians have no great stake in preserving some sacred aesthetic space for Electronica, being primarily musicians, and therefore being versatile enough to play within the confines of this phase as it moves them, but capable and willing to move back into a musical arena when they want to.

The ego that is infused into the rhetoric surrounding Electronica is appalling at worst, and hilarious at best. Many of the practitioners of this music and their supporters in the media are first to cast stones of derision at Progressive Rock, citing its pretension and over-the-top antics as being beyond the pale of good taste. But craft is never spoken of. Lack of musicianship is never spoken of, a lack of compositional and improvisational creativity is never addressed, because there is no argument here. Even the Jethro Tulls, Gongs, and Pink Floyds took seriously to varying degrees the issue of craft, because it was accepted that they were working in a musical forum that required some musical expertise. Electronica functions as a musical sub-category, but the issue of craft is largely a non-issue.

Progressive Rock also supplied Electronica with the inventive curiosity to look for new sources of sound. All those Mellotrons and Moogs are mysteriously showing up again, used by young musicians that seem to be sure that their manipulation of these arcane objects just must be more creative than that of the histrionic, long haired dinosaurs that used them in the 70's and 80's.

All things run their course, and in this culture all fashion recycles itself. I fear that we have witnessed the rebirth of beatnik culture and disco in one sour soup, revisiting us as Electronica. I for one will be glad when the bored media seeks to endow the next "next big thing" with its mark of approval, so that we all can cease to be inundated with the recycled psychedelic Dionysia that is Electronica. Please, Electronica, unload. **ME**

Radhha-cal

Mamma

Nina Hagen

Interview by Robert Phoenix
photography by Tom Pitts
styling and makeup by Jorjée





The moon is full and fat, the night—the year's longest. Across town, Nina Hagen is getting ready to auction off parts of her past that have had a close association to various parts of her body, as well as original works of art, collages with a Warholian stamp.

Twenty-somethings flock around her and gather at her feet, soaking up the spectacle, some actually clutching her relics. Her seven year-old-son, Otis, sits on her lap for most of the time, head shaved, staring fiercely into the crowd like a young lion. She's not in trouble with the IRS, she's here for a benefit to raise money for a hospital in India, down the road from her favorite ashram. For Hagen, this is an act of devotion. The banshee from Berlin has morphed into the guru mother.

Two days before, we visited her at the Maxwell Hotel where she went from Diva to Shiva and back again. She is first and foremost a storyteller. Her voice changes character and pitch as much as her face contorts into cartoon characters yet to be spawned. Nina is a channel changer. She's charming and playful, but make no mistake, she's in control. Interviewing her is like having an audience with royalty—one must be content to sit at her feet and revel in an off-hand command performance.

We are all equal, all religions are equal. We have to learn to live together in harmony—all the different tribes and races—and have one common thing going on in all daily lives.

M2: Tell me about your guru.

NH: They call him the Yogi-Christ of India. He is mentioned in Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* which talks about his guru and the guru of his guru, and the guru of the guru which is the guru of the gurus. And the guy I'm talking about—they call him Babaji. I only have a book here and I gave my last picture away. It's all in my collages. Sri Muniraji [the spiritual head of the ashram she's doing the benefit for] was his closest disciple. Babaji died on Valentine's Day in '84. I happened to be busy doing an album called *Fearless*. I hadn't met the incarnation of Babaji. But I knew many stories about Babaji, and I experienced the way of life he was teaching because I spent time at his ashram in India. His teaching includes things like: we are all equal; all religions are equal; we have to learn to live together in harmony—all the different tribes and races—and have one common thing going on in all daily lives.

M2: What's that common thing?

NH: To recycle, burn old trash, to take care of what you consume. Understanding the sacredness of all things and having fun at the same time.

M2: He's not a heavy guru then.

NH: He's very strict in a way. If you spend some time with him, he can look directly into your heart and knows what's going on with you. So he acts as a mirror. If you have emotional troubles with your loved one or with your life, he imprints on you. He can show you the real happy life without your hang ups, and you learn techniques and yoga forms from those schools. Breathing yoga... which is called re-birthing in our language. It gets rid of our old, horrible imprints and sickness.

I died on my first LSD trip. So I was searching for God.

It all began when I was about 12, when I was looking at all those Communist faces around me, because I grew up in East Berlin. And they were very fanatical Communists, like the fascists and the nationalists. They all said there's no God, so I thought I'd look. I grabbed the Bible and kneeled down before an old wooden Madonna face. I went to Poland and sat there in a church looking at Jesus up there. A couple of years later, when I was 19, friends told me that things can happen if you take LSD. You can meet God or Buddha. It was very difficult in the beginning.

M2: Were you looking for a guru?

NH: I was with two Polish people. It was like dying, but I couldn't die. It was like a never-ending zone of pain. So I cried for help, "I need a doctor; I'm dying!" And this one Polish guy said he was going to give me a downer to go off my trip. So I thought if I took the pill I would have to take LSD one day again because I really wanted to find God. So I didn't take the pills. The pain came back and then I cried out to God, "Please help me!" And things started to get better, and I heard this sweet male voice saying my name and "Nina, you're here and you have to die." My old self didn't want to die. I cried out and the pain came back. And I remembered what he said, and I thought it's the way it goes; I have to surrender. I lay down and closed my eyes. I came out of my body and saw colors and a hospital scene with cut off amputated pieces and parts of people. And a nurse calling my name and clapping my cheek, like she was trying to bring me back to life. But I said, "I'm not going back there. I feel so much better now." And I heard this voice again saying to open my eyes. And I opened them and he said "Turn around." And it was shaking and vibrating, the picture. And he looked at me with so much love. He was beautiful, long hair like Jesus. And I said, "Are you going to go away again like all the others?" And he said, "I'm always there; I will always be there." And the big stone fell off my heart and I relaxed. I asked how he could be there, and he said, "You took LSD, so I must be your trip." I asked his name and he shook his head. And I heard voices calling him and saying they love him and respect him. It was kind of a mischmasch, but I could hear, "Only Him..." and "Muusch, muusch." So I thought his name was Muusch, because that's all I could hear, because there were many voices of people calling him. So I crawled on his lap all night, and he told me about when I would be really dying. And that there were four possibilities when you die. And he drew four time tunnels on the wall. I asked him "which one to go to you?" and he said "I can't help" and that you automatically end up where you belong. I wanted to know which one to take to go to him. I felt like he was my boyfriend. And I've felt like that ever since. And when I ran into a poster in '87 of Babaji, I thought, "My trip, is it you?" My now girl friend Trudi, who knew him had a reading there about him. First I thought "It's the Lord of the Sun...He's the Sun God." And we just finished two days ago the George Harrison version of "My Sweet Lord." It's for my friend Luca's project, but I'm going to throw it on my album too.

M2: What is Luca's project?

NH: Luca is a disco star in Australia. He travels from disco to disco. And spreads the names of the Lord through his dance hall music. He just came from Bangkok with crowns he wanted me to wear, but my daughter looks better in them.

M2: How old is your daughter? [Cosma Shiva]



NH: She's 16. She's an actress already, and she's playing in two big movies in Germany this autumn. She's played little parts before. She played a junkie, and she had to sit there and shiver. It was very sad.

M2: She came from good genes. It's in her blood.

NH: Yes. It's a sad story with her father though. But she had a good step-father in Ibiza.

M2: What nationality is Sri Muniraji? Is he Indian?

NH: His mother is Tibetan and his father is from India. His parents are friends of the parents of the Dalai Lama and both of them have known each other since

they were five years old. Isn't that sweet? Anyway, Muniraji is an incredible teacher. It was so great to spend a couple of weeks with him in India. Every morning we wake up and they apply the *tilaka*. That's the make-up of the gods—three yellow lines and a red dot and a yellow dot. And you just feel so cool.

M2: Isn't Babaji like Saint Germain, mortal for a long period of time... coming in and out of the body?

NH: Godhead—like those Jimmy Hendrix t-shirts—back to the Godhead. Babaji is Godhead like Krishna, therefore he was Buddha too. And Godhead comes in different people's forms and then they call him different names. And he appears in different countries and cultures. And according to the characteristics of the people in each culture, he teaches. To me, Babaji is a Shiva incarnation. He destroys your illusions to make place for the real. It's another approach towards us than Krishna. He just played his flute. And every girl thought he was talking to her only. I made a song on my new album about that. And each song always exists in German and English. I hope to be in India in October because a German filmmaker is making an independent film about me. Also in India we will be filming.

M2: So will you be playing guitar on Saturday night in Berkeley?

NH: Yes. I play guitar on all my songs.

M2: Is your new album guitar-oriented?

NH: No, not at all. It has a lot to do with inter-cosmic frequency control situations.

M2: So are you going to use more electronics and dance rhythms?

NH: We will use everything, so that ears and hearts and souls are bombarded by the finest music.

M2: You were born on March 11. Do you know about the number 11 in numerology?

NH: Yaah.

M2: It's a master number. Between the age of 35 and 54, you get the opportunity to express the qualities of inspiration and revelation. And the 11 represents the ability to get your message out through the media in a big way. In some ways it's an ungrounded number, because you need to have people around you that create structure and form. But it's one that really dials you into the godhead.

NH: My tattoo represents my assignment.

M2: What is your assignment?

NH: It's a television set. I have an antenna and on top of and it has the words "Om Nama Shiva" in it. It means "I take refuge in God" and it is one of the

most powerful prayers in the world. It is important for people to pray. We are so powerful, we don't know how powerful we are. We have the ability to stop time. And when people pray, when they pray with all of their hearts, then they can be one with the Godhead and if there is a earthquake, or natural disaster, or even an atomic explosion, you could be right next to it and you would not be harmed—you would be taken up and away.

M2: The Christians call it it the "rapture."

NH: *[in her best Eartha Kitt purr]* The rrrrapture.

M2: Have you ever been aboard a UFO?

NH: *Well...* I do not know that, but I was pregnant with Cosma Shiva, 1980, around Decemberish and we were renting a house in Malibu that Barbara Streisand and Bob Dylan had lived in. We went to bed and fell asleep. I got up in the middle of the night and opened the curtains and there it was hanging in the night sky, outside the house. I was mesmerized by these incredible colors. I was paralyzed, I couldn't move, I had one thought, "Oh shit, I can't move, I can't call my girlfriend." But I was happy, incredibly happy. Every color had a different personality. Green was indescribable energy, very intense, it was almost like a person. And blue was like every race on the planet, it was like brotherhood. And white was beautiful too. And then I was able to look inside. There were three beings in the space ship—there was a round one. But it was incredibly peaceful, so peaceful. They didn't look at me, they just went about their business. Then I woke up and the sun was shining and the curtains

were open. And I couldn't remember how I got there.

M2: Missing time.

NH: Yes, has that happened to you?

M2: Yeah, one time.

NH: Was it a good UFO or a bad UFO?

M2: Well they were nice enough to project Raquel Welch impersonating a Hoover into my brain while they extracted my essence but... just kidding. It's hard to say, I can't remember much about it. But what about your assignment? I'm still not clear on it.

NH: I 'm going to Germany now to have a meeting with a big TV producer and they want me to do a TV Show. I want to have my own TV show. I watch Conan O'Brian, David Letterman and Rosie. I 'm really ready for it. Merv Griffin once told me...

M2: You were on Merv Griffin?

NH: Yes, and he said, "Nina, when you're ready you must have your own TV show".

M2: You'll be terrific. It'll give you a chance to dress-up, dance and sing. It relates back to the eleven vibration—getting your message out. Will it be on German TV?

NH: It will be filmed here for German television.

M2: In German?

NH: Both English and German.

M2: Well, Nina I hope that your efforts with all your benefits pay off both monetarily and karmically.

NH: Oh they already have, already have. **M2**



Otis and Nina

FRANK

Going to the comics shop, a few doors down from Moby Dick's on the corner of Hennepin and Seventh, was about as good as it got when I was fourteen. These weren't the comics your parent's read. They were gritty, violent and smart. The industry was being stood on its head by hot new talent and none was hotter, grittier or more talented than Frank Miller. Through his work I grew to appreciate the squalid dankness of Moby Dick's, or at least find the derelict bar newly fascinating. Miller transformed every character he touched. He resurrected Batman and turned an unknown blind hero into the hottest title in the industry. He's now having the time of his life doing Sin City for Dark Horse Comics. It's some of his best work to date.

Mischa Beitz: How did you get your start in comic books?

Frank Miller: It's the only thing I ever wanted to do. My mother tells me I declared to her that I was going to become a comic book artist when I was six years old. By then I was already starting to draw my own. When I was able to—in other words when I was out of that prison that we call High School—I moved to Manhattan and essentially made a nuisance of myself. Neal Adams, the artist, was of particular help to me: giving me advice and doing his best to discourage the young fool, but a very generous man. I just kept banging on people's doors and hanging out in lobbies until I was able to get work.



NO NEED
TO PLAY
IT QUIET.

NOT
ANYMORE.

MILLER



Artwork by Frank Miller. TM *Sin City* and © Frank Miller Inc.

M2: Persistence paid off.

FM: Oh yes. Especially then because it was considered a dying field. Many of the first editors I worked with just shook their heads at me and said, "We all know we're going to be out of business in five years. What are you doing?" Of course, I showed up with completely the wrong material. I showed up with all these crime comics I'd drawn and I was somehow arrogant enough to think they were going to start publishing that sort of thing.

M2: You're certainly doing it now.

FM: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I'm having an absolute ball.

M2: The crime story is something you've incorporated in a lot of your work. You managed to incorporate a lot of it in *Daredevil*.

FM: Yeah, that was '78 or '79. Beyond my life-long love of crime stories I had also rather recently discovered Will Eisner's *Spirit*. My *Daredevil* work was obviously grabbing all it could from Will Eisner and applying it to the basic vernacular Marvel Comics.

M2: *Daredevil* was your first big break at Marvel.

FM: Yeah. Before *Daredevil* I'd been doing single stories here and there for every publisher there was. I did *Weird War Tales* for DC Comics and *Twilight Zone* for Gold Key Comics, all kinds of odd pieces. Then I got the break of doing a couple of fill-in issues for *Spider Man* featuring Daredevil as guest star and started lobbying very hard to get the job on *Daredevil*.

M2: So you really fell in love with the character?

FM: I thought Daredevil was the most vulnerable character they had. Usually when you ask about a super hero people tell you, "well, he can fly, he's very strong." With



Daredevil, you'd have to say, "he's blind" and I thought I could do a lot with that; make him a *Spirit*-like crime fighter.

M2: So you had the idea of doing a *Spirit*-like character when you began lobbying for *Daredevil*.

FM: Oh yeah, *Daredevil* was less tied up than other super heroes; much less popular. At the time, they made comic books that didn't sell bi-monthly and when I got the title it was selling poorly enough to only be published every two months; which was also convenient for me, because I couldn't do more than that at the time. It's a standing rule: if you're going to come in on all these old comics, the smartest thing is to pick the biggest loser. It was the same with *Batman*. *Batman* was actually selling quite poorly when I did *Dark Knight*.

M2: You wrote the script for *RoboCop II*, how did you get involved in that?

FM: The phone rang. It was really as simple as that. The producer called me up and asked me if I wanted to write it. I hadn't really planned on working in the movies. It always intrigued me but I didn't have any particular ambition for it. It also hit at a time when I was in a real creative lull. I guess I got too much attention after *Dark Knight*. Got a little full of myself. From what I gathered, *Dark Knight* had influenced the first movie a great deal and they needed a script for the second.



by Mischa
Z. Beitz

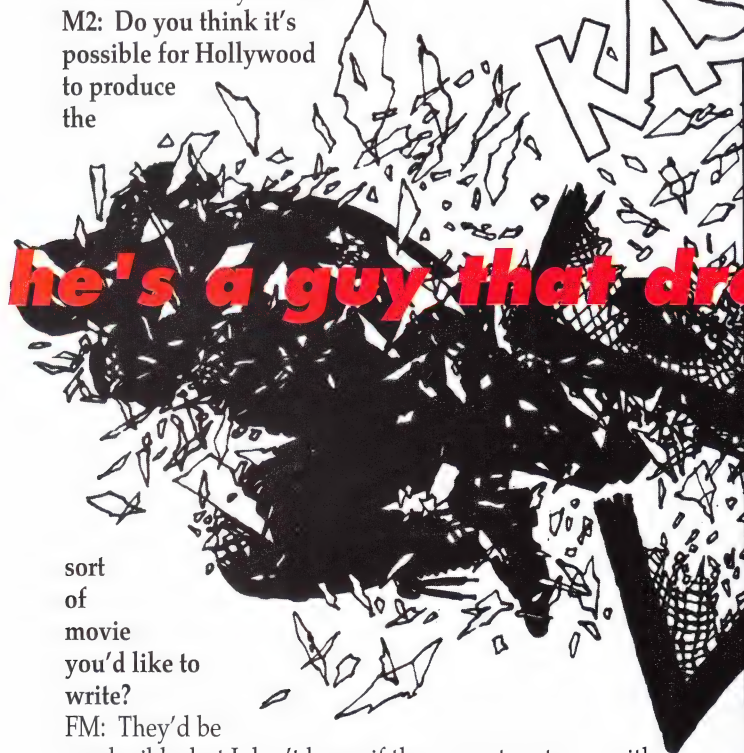
M2: There were many 'Milleresque' themes in the movie, there was one scene using medical equipment as torture devices...

FM: [laughing] Yeah, one of my favorites.

M2: You've been very outspoken about censorship in both comics and movies...

FM: I don't really think you can comfortably use the word censorship in relation to Hollywood. They surrendered the first amendment years ago by adopting a rating system. Like television, when they say first amendment they're closing the barn door way too late.

M2: Do you think it's possible for Hollywood to produce the



sort of movie you'd like to write?

FM: They'd be producible, but I don't know if the current system—with so many hands on every project, with everything costing so much and aiming at such a wide audience—I don't know if it's a real good route to take. Also, I never regarded writing movies as a step up. I've always loved comics the most, and I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing.

M2: Any thoughts on a rating system for comic books?

FM: Over my dead body—I'll fight it tooth and nail as many times as I have to.

M2: It's interesting that TV seems to have succumbed.

FM: And you'll notice that even when the censors got what they wanted, they kept complaining—even more loudly. That's what happens and that's why no concession makes any sense. You don't use red meat as shark repellent. They never seem to learn. Every few years there's talk of a rating system in comic books and we've got to bang that drum again.

M2: What do you think of the translation from comic book to film? Do you think it works?

FM: No... There are a few moments that are kind of nice; some moments in the first Superman movie, for instance, that really did celebrate the folk hero. But I think in general the movies based on comic books are pretty good proof they don't translate.

M2: Yeah, I keep expecting great things and end up being terribly disappointed. What about the *Batman* movie? Did Tim Burton bother to talk to you about it?

FM: No. As a matter of fact, my own reaction to what I've seen of the *Batman* movies is that they've got nothing to do with comic books. They're adapted from the old TV show. You know, the slumming stars showing up as villains; they're like the *Batman* TV show without the humor. The *Batman* movies have much more in common with *The Brady Bunch*, *The Beverly Hillbillies* and the *Star Trek* movies. They're clearly TV derived. It's delusional for people to think that these films are in any way related to the original comics.

M2: Especially after the *Dark Knight* where you obviously went to great lengths to pull the character apart, make *Batman* morally ambivalent; the most guilty and culpable character in some respects.

FM: Well, I went for the Wagnerian.

M2: There was something very subversive about what you did with *Batman*.

FM: Well the super hero started as an outlaw and at one point they all got deputized; about the same time that the comic book industry got castrated in the 1950s. The super heroes reflected that. Superman in his earliest stories before World War II was a rather mysterious figure who did outrageous things. There's one very old story where two warring generals are carrying on a terrible battle and soldiers are dying on either side. It's horrible. So, Superman kidnaps both of the generals, drops them in front of the battle, tells them to sit and sort it out and then leaves. He wasn't always the authority figure and with *Batman* it isn't much of a stretch to point out that he's a guy that dresses up like a bat and throws people through windows.

M2: Any idea what led to the creation of the super heroes of the 1930's.

FM: I have my own theories. Obviously you can go all the way back to the ancient heroes. Heroes pop up from time to time in every culture. My own pet theory is that the American super hero might have been created in response to American anti-Semitism. If you look back over the list of people who created and recreated the American comic book, they're all Jewish. I think there's a relationship there. The Hebrew Bible is so full of characters of such great power; it's not much of a step to see how Jack Kirby or Siegel and Shuster would have channeled some of that into super heroes... It's just a pet theory of mine.

M2: Kim Thompson asked you about fascism and the role of the super hero in another interview. You replied that the hero was sort of beyond good and evil; you couldn't judge them because their acts were like a force of nature.

FM: I believe that was an ancient interview, right? It must have been when I was doing *Dark Knight* because I sounded a lot like that back then. In *Dark Knight* I was creating a larger than life figure and treating it very seriously. A larger than life figure would be very hard for us to figure out and might even be

capricious. I think people running around thinking these characters should be role models ought to sit down and read *The Odyssey*.

M2: How does the series fit in your estimation now? Do you look back and say, "my greatest work was *Dark Knight*?"

FM: If I did that, I'd have to retire. No. To me they're all steps along the way. With each project, I end up with a few more weapons in my arsenal, a few more things I can do and a few more ideas about where to go next. I don't know if I could have done the *Sin City* work if I hadn't done the previous books.

M2: Any thoughts on Marvel's chapter 11?

FM: Oh, I think this has been coming down the pike for awhile. They lost their heart a long time ago and the initial brilliance of Jack Kirby and Stan Lee could only be milked for so long. They steadily alienated the better talent.

The prevailing attitude had always been that the trademarks were all that mattered and the talent was completely inter-

M2: The number of small publishers putting out books is tremendous. There appears to be a renaissance of sorts going on. Any ideas where it's leading?

FM: Well, I can say where I hope it's leading. I hope to see more and more individual voices out there. More authors actually doing the kind of work they want to do rather than factories turning out material that's all geared toward the same audience.

M2: You certainly seem to be doing work you enjoy.

FM: Absolutely, this is the kind of comic I've always wanted to do, and there are others; people like Jeff Smith who does a comic called *Bone*. It's unlike anything else being published, and he publishes it himself. You know, there are more individual voices out there and there's actually more and better talent than there's ever been. We're in the midst of a transition between this old two party system—the old factory system—and something else, though there hasn't been a clear new movement to replace the broken one.

and throws people through windows

changeable. Even when that was plainly not true anymore, they had to hold to the theory and it was really only a matter of time before it caught up with them. All their characters were created in the early 1960's. That's thirty years ago. Can you imagine how a record company would do just re-releasing Led Zeppelin all the time?

They've had a couple of up-surges across the years and I was part of one of them. But it was quite a number of years ago and it was still essentially the same group of people influencing the book. You know, Stan Lee was still around and there was an infusion of a lot of us kids who had grown up on Marvel comics wanting to do them and getting a chance. The characters were good and they were bound to have another surge or two. It was just... how far can you go with much of anything? There are only two American super heroes who are folk heroes. There's only Superman and Batman. Everything else is a distant distant third.

M2: When you look at the number of *Batman* titles DC is pumping out now, you have to wonder a bit. Is it because the folk hero status...?

FM: I think these characters are all over exposed.

M2: When you think of the future of DC, do you think they'll be able to lead the way with *Superman* and *Batman*?

FM: I don't know if they'll lead the way. Traditionally they're not leaders, but they are doing some very wise things that constitute a real investment in the future. They're diversifying their line wildly. They're publishing things I don't think anyone would have dreamed they'd have published ten years ago. They have the big Warner behind them so I suspect they have more freedom to maneuver than other publishers.

I don't think anybody is really going to lead the way. I think it's going to be a time when no single publisher is going to dominate. In fact I think the role of the publisher is changing steadily. You've got to understand, when you go to a book store you don't say, "I only buy Berkeley books."

M2: Do you think that changes in the ease of publishing have had an effect on this?

FM: I don't think that's nearly as important a factor as the changes in distribution that took place. Sometime back in the late 70's a guy named Bill Sulvine started a new system whereby the publishers would distribute directly to comic shops which proved much more profitable. So rather than printing 300M copies of a comic book and actually selling 50, they would print to order. That way the profits rose. I think that probably had more to do with the rise of smaller publishers than anything else. Another factor was that people like me were kicking up a fuss saying we wanted to own our own stuff and younger publishers came along who didn't have as many bad habits.

M2: At one point it seemed you were interested in writing a book on the subject. You felt it was a very important time in the industry and that somebody ought to sit and write it all down. Will you write a book on this?

FM: No, I don't think so. I don't know if I have the patience. I keep wanting to draw it [laughs] I'm not much of a scholar, but I'll certainly help anybody who intends to do a history. I think it's one of those, "somebody really ought to." I'm not the guy, one look at my studio and you'd understand. [laughs] I'm not very organized.

M2: Any projects beyond *Sin City* at this point? Is there anything new brooding in the back of your head?

FM: There is, I try not to talk about stuff until it's pretty far along. Believe it or not I've got a historical piece. I'm like a kid in a candy store, there's no end to the possibilities.

M2: I just read William Gibson's new book, *Idoru*. Are you familiar with his work?

FM: I haven't read this one.

M2: One of the things that plays a big role is a nano-technology that autonomously rebuilds parts of cities. I remember reading it and thinking immediately of *Ronin* and the Aquarius Project. Gibson's style and ideas are very similar to yours. Have you ever communicated with him?

FM: I never have, but I'd look forward to the opportunity. It's a weird time for fiction in general. I think there's a lot of synthesis and searching going on. People are combining things in unusual ways, and Gibson's a good example.

M2: Do you know what it is that distinguishes this work?

FM: I suppose it's the audience. They're restless enough now to take a chance.

are clearly fictional but his stuff has the ring of reality. I mean, it's utterly unromanticized. With *Sin City* you're dealing with a subject that's highly romanticized.

M2: As I was going through the *Sin City* covers, I couldn't help but notice that your title's are like censor bait: *Sex and Violence*, *That Yellow Bastard*, etc. It's like waving a red flag!

We're dumbing the entire country because we're afraid an 18-month-

M2: Which is good for you.

FM: Yeah! It's a great time to be in this field. It's funny, the only thing that ever makes the headlines is this news about Marvel Comics filing for bankruptcy, or whatever, so people think we're in some kind of dead field. They don't realize how alive it is. There's nothing like working in a field that's just been laid clean.

M2: When I first saw your *Martha Washington* series it reminded me a lot of Howard Chaykin's work; particularly *American Flag*.

FM: Well, Chaykin and I shared studio space for a couple of years, I remember when he started doing *American Flag*—it was very exciting to see the ideas fly as wildly as that and it was quite liberating for me. He brings an amazing number of influences to comics that people haven't seen before.

M2: You've been writing crime stories your whole career, have they always had the noir twist?

FM: Oh yeah, I grew up reading things like Raymond Chandler and Mickey Spillane. Still do as a matter of fact.

M2: Have you read all their works?

FM: Oh yeah—several times each. There's also Hammet and a host of others that aren't as well known. There's Chester Himes and Jim Thompson... there's an awful lot of great crime fiction to read.

M2: Are there any new authors you're reading?

FM: Well I really enjoy Carl Hiaasen. Unfortunately he's most known for writing the novel from which the movie *Strip-tease* was based. But that really didn't capture his writing at all. He's remarkably witty and a vicious writer. And there's Charles Willeford. Now Willeford's stuff is old... he's dead, but as far as what's going on right now I'm not really up to spark yet.

I've read a little James Ellroy and want to read more but he takes some doing. I simply have to take enough time off to immerse myself in his work. Stylistically he's a shock. When he gets staccato I've never seen anything like it. I also enjoy Andrew Vachss' work. His stuff is barely fiction. He's on a much more realistic end of things. His characters

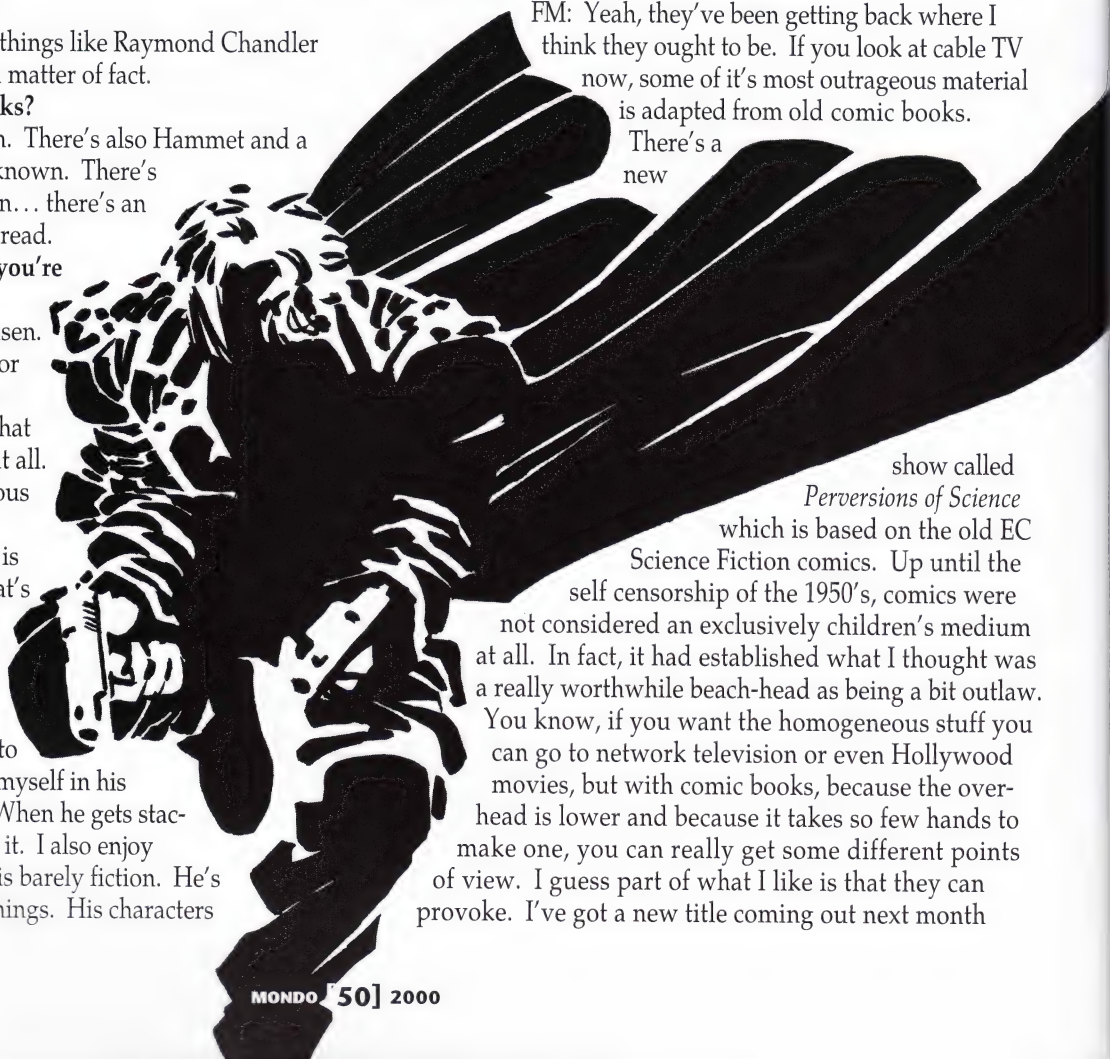
FM: [laughing] We'll see, that's always been part of the genre. There's an old Jim Thompson novel called *That Swell Looking Babe*. *Sin City* is meant to hit hard on a visceral level. When I come up with a title as good as *That Yellow Bastard*, there's no way I'm going to say "oh, this is going to get me in trouble." I mean, trouble is my business. I suppose one of the things I respond to these days is that we're living in such tender times. Everybody is *oh* so careful not to offend *oh* anyone and everybody's always concerned about kids all the time. We're dumbing the entire country down to the level of an 18-month-old, because we're afraid an 18-month-old might have a bad afternoon. I guess I respond to this overly tender approach by wanting to be a bit outrageous.

M2: Comic books have changed dramatically in the last thirty years.

FM: Yeah, they've been getting back where I think they ought to be. If you look at cable TV now, some of it's most outrageous material is adapted from old comic books.

There's a new

show called *Perversions of Science* which is based on the old EC Science Fiction comics. Up until the self censorship of the 1950's, comics were not considered an exclusively children's medium at all. In fact, it had established what I thought was a really worthwhile beach-head as being a bit outlaw. You know, if you want the homogeneous stuff you can go to network television or even Hollywood movies, but with comic books, because the overhead is lower and because it takes so few hands to make one, you can really get some different points of view. I guess part of what I like is that they can provoke. I've got a new title coming out next month



called *Tales to Offend*; as in *Tales from the Crypt*. It's formatted very much like an old DC comic.

M2: Is this a *Sin City* title?

FM: No, this is its own thing. It does have one *Sin City* story and it has two stories featuring a hero named Lance Blastoff who teaches children not to recycle, to eat plenty of meat and to smoke.

different shapes and images of different sizes have different meanings. The biggest enemy any cartoonist has is time because unlike a film maker or even a prose writer, the reader is in total control of time. Technically it only takes a few seconds to read a comic book page unless there are too many words on it. You have to keep the words at a minimum to be true to the form. For instance, I find you can make the reader pause and take a breath by using a single-page

down to the level of an 18-month-old old might have a bad afternoon

M2: No relation to *Toy Story's* Buzz Lightyear?

FM: I came up with the idea as a parody of the Sterling Buck Rogers type. Lance Blastoff as far as I know is the only super hero who has a hip flask.

M2: Concealed as a laser gun?

FM: [laughing] No, it's just plainly a flask.

M2: One of the things that has changed since the 30's is the way comic books are laid out. Reading panels sequentially from upper left-hand corner to lower right-hand corner has changed radically and you were a big part of that process.

FM: The music comparison is inevitable. You can go from Bach to Jazz and see certain structures seemingly fall apart when actually new structures are forming. I think a fair number of my colleagues and I have been wanting to shove things around and see what happens. As far back as the 40's Will Eisner was shaking things up. Though he generally stuck more or less to three tier, he played with it a lot. He had things run vertically up and down and then later Jack Kirby just made the pages explode. All of a sudden a single image would be two pages wide. It's an on-going process and I think the more that's attempted the more can be discovered.

M2: I think narrative techniques have become vastly more complex. If I showed a contemporary comic book to my mother I don't think she'd know how to read it.

FM: Well, that can happen. I work very hard to make my stuff as readable as possible, but it's a form that one has to learn. If people are only used to the four panel newspaper strip they're going to be in for some shocks. As you play with it, you discover that

tableau. Why? Because they're being hit with a single forceful image rather than one that is asking you to move forward. That's

the real stuff, the joy of my craft: finding ways to communicate things that take a single moment. Things that perhaps, at the start of my career I might have done on a third of a page I'll now give ten pages, in order to really squeeze every ounce of value out of it.

M2: Do you spend much time trying different layouts and thinking "this moment needs to be bigger"?

FM: Oh yes, all the time. That's what I enjoy most. As much as I enjoy the craft of drawing—there really isn't a part of this job I don't like except maybe ruling panel borders, like boring—I work with a thick marker on vellum just doing a series of rough picture ideas

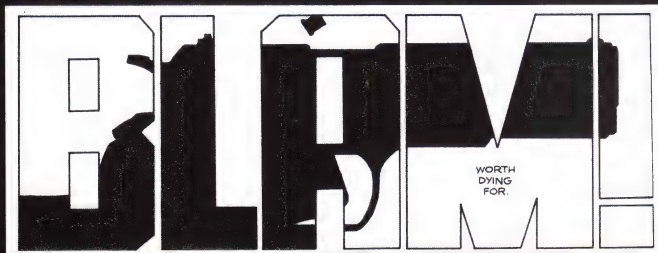
and I'll work out an entire sequence. Perhaps I'll use one in ten of the roughs that I prepared. I tend to do that very fast though—it's where I feel like I'm conjuring or something, just throwing stuff at the page. Then I'll find a way to approach something that I haven't seen before, and it all becomes very simple. I'm probably being incoherent now.

M2: No, not at all. The representation of time in the comic book is fascinating. It's visual and in many ways closer to the raw stuff of consciousness than any other medium. The symbolic immediacy of comic books is something that other media can't touch. I'm thinking particularly of film.



FM: Film is just so damn literal. For one thing you use real people. It's much more powerful than comics, there's no competition there, but a comic can crawl inside your head better. I mean, a movie may shock but it will rarely stick with you for a long time. A comic, even a little *Calvin & Hobbes* strip, can be something you'll remember ten years later and that's where the form is much more the brother of prose than it is of film. I think comics have much more in common with prose. They really work on the deepest level, because they work much more *inside* your head. The drawings themselves can be illustrative and ornate but they need not be, because the reader is doing a tremendous amount of image making. Not just finishing the pictures in front of them but filling in all those little white gutters between moments. That's the beauty of the form, but it's also part of what makes it very hard to practice. You're constantly playing a dangerous game with your reader. You know, will this connect, will it hit them on the right level and does it still make sense.

... finding ways to communicate things



M2: It seems there's a process of interpretation and communication taking place between moments that's more direct than film, or even prose, could ever be.

FM: I guess the thing I find so wonderful about comic form is that you're really in a situation of communicating with one person, but it's also a visual experience. So the author is getting across the intimacies of something they wrote but it's amplified by the fact that you're seeing reality interpreted by that person. Getting back to the *Calvin & Hobbes* example, I hope that Watterson continues not to let anyone touch that. I don't ever want to see some little actor try to be Calvin. Calvin *is* that scribble.

M2: A very elegant scribble.

FM: Beautiful, beautiful work. I really think he's the premier strip practitioner. I find his stuff remarkable; it's such wonderful eye candy and it charms constantly.

M2: My aesthetic was profoundly influenced by the artwork you and people like Bill Sienkiewicz produced. That stuff will be with me forever.

FM: [laughing] That's kind of fun. I look at the comics I grew up on, they were obviously about ten years before the ones you did, and they were like Jack Kirby comics. Since then I've researched the history of comics and I've got shelves of them; a whole history. The period from the 40's to the 50's is actually the peak of the craft. Unless you count Kirby in which case you've got to say the whole thing. He just kept recurring and revolutionizing everything.

M2: When did you discover Manga?

FM: I was first exposed to Manga by friends in my early twenties and I was just knocked flat on my back. It was a completely different interpretation of comic books and such a liberating one. Unfortunately, I saw the best first. I saw Kojima's artwork on *Lone Wolf and Cub*.

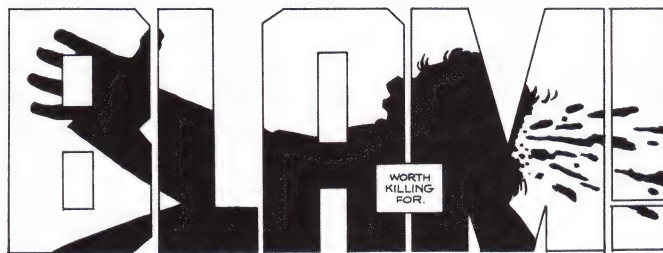
M2: The stories themselves are just gorgeous, there's something about that writing.

FM: One of the things I was really struck by was the absolutely different sense of time. Things were allowed to breathe fully, whereas in the traditional American comic book the story is just dripping off the pages; so many incidents per page. I'm talking about the traditional American comic book most people think of, with six panels per page and each panel has a shot of Superman pulling the earth on a chain or some-



thing. [laughs] A lot of what I've been trying to do with *Sin City* is play the American pace against the Japanese, so that every once in a while it speeds up and you get a lot of little panels with an awful lot happening. Then some little event will take four pages that would actually take place in a second. In the last *Sin City* I finished—*Sin City: Family Values*—there's a scene where a man is hit by a car; I gave it six pages before he even hit the ground. He just tumbled through the air.

M2: Manga must have been a big influence in doing *Ronin*?



FM: I think that was really where it was the most immediate and obvious influence, because I was trying to draw like Kojima in the Samurai sequences. I think it's *Sin City* where I actually internalized more of what really makes Manga work. With *Ronin* I was an extremely excited fellow who had discovered Jean Giraud and Goseki Kojima in the same year and wanted to imitate both at the same time.

M2: How do the two traditions compare?

FM: Both cultures have a tremendous visual history and they were taking very different directions. In Japan comics are a mass medium. In American they only sell briefly and don't belong in the mass media.

M2: In Japan you see businessmen on the bullet train...

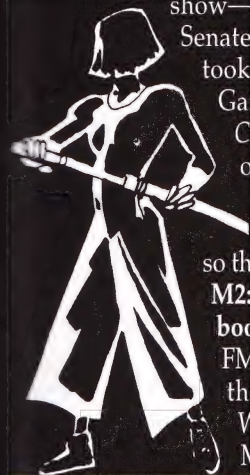
FM: Reading fishing comics [laughs]... It's a different history. We really went off the rails in the early 50's. The juvenile

delinquency threat at the time—which was about as real as the current, deadly threat that's resulted in having seventeen letters before a TV show—created a scare in the industry. Even when the U.S.

Senate vindicated comic books, the comic book industry took it upon itself to do something about William Gaines' Company, EC comics—which did *Tales from the Crypt*, the Crime Comics, Mad Comics etc. Gaines was outselling the rest of the publishers and they essentially conspired to shut him down. That's the whole reason there was a comics code for all those years...

M2: That little shield in the corner of all those comic books...

FM: It's a badge of shame ... yeah. They shut down the best comic publisher in history. But you know, William Gaines was a very smart fellow. He took little Mad Comics, turned it into a magazine and did rather well for himself.



that take a single moment

M2: I've enjoyed hearing your thoughts on the medium.

FM: I'm always afraid of being incoherent when I start talking about that end of it. I mean, so much of my mind is spent there that I'm afraid I come back sounding like I'm speaking in tongues or something.

M2: It's a unique medium: so little is used to produce such a rich narrative...

FM: I think one of the reasons I found myself so entranced with the Japanese stuff is because as I studied it more, I studied the Japanese more. When I was there for a few weeks I came to realize how iconographic a culture they are. Of their two written languages, one of them is pictographic. The pictographs are kind of hard for us to sort out because they've become so stylized over time, but to me that was a real clue that there's a common ancestor to both the word and the picture. In a lot of ways comics are an attempt to bring the two back together. So when people ask whether I like to write or draw better, on some days I'll say I like to draw better, it's more physical, but most days it's like the two are really one thing.

M2: It seems like an unfair question. If you preferred one or the other, then that's what you'd do and you don't... you do comic books.



FM: Yeah. I'm not a novelist and I'm not an illustrator. I'd probably fail at either. So I'm glad I've got comic books.

M2: Thank God for comic books.

FM: [laughing] I've spent a lot of my life saying that. M2

"provides
a fresh, almost
experimental feel to
a massively
extensive subject."

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oliver stone

The genius, in work and deed, is necessarily a squanderer: that he squanders himself, that is his greatness. He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself—and this is a calamitous, involuntary fatality, no less than a river's flooding the land. Yet, because so much is owed to such explosives, much has also been given them in return: for example, a kind of higher morality. After all, that is the way of human gratitude: it misunderstands its benefactors.

—Friedrich Nietzsche: *Twilight of the Idols*

The Wounded and The Living



interviewed by Steve Beck
photographed by Tom Pitts

Oliver Stone—mythmaker of our time, mythman, mythstuff itself: William and *Oliverre*, the hero twins, Romulus and Remus, the *Dioscuri*. Suckled by a she-wolf, a footloose fool who tho' erratic rose to moral honor, crazed by some dread game Edgar Allan Poe might play with his mind, sabotaged by his deceitful demon double, owling iboo, brandishing his fist at the Homeric gods, wandering like Theseus without the thread, like Ulysses in search of a harbor, a new Cythera.

Like Nietzsche's "recklessly daring, magnificently violent, high-flying type, made to sweep others off their feet," he prays *in extremis* "Oh Lord, surprise me." Because boredom is a sunset seen too long, boredom is exposition, and boredom is hell. A driving drizzle in the soul.

Hiding behind the façade of Illusion Entertainment and Oliver's Tough Baby persona is an R&D-for-hire facility that develops twenty films for every one released. Equally at home on *Jeopardy* with Arianna Huffington or plying the treacherous shoals of black ops and blowback, Oliver remains his own enigmatic creation.

A self-proclaimed "outsider," there are nonetheless those Washington bigwig connections that give him his chameleon's cloak. A self-styled iconoclast, a Disturber of History, he's also just a mute stone, the record-keeper for the Roman Senate. His prophetic powers are such that his films often *anticipate* history (*Wall Street*, *NBK*). And he's one of the very few directors in Hollywood wielding the notorious final cut.

A conversation with

Oliver Stone

Oliver runs his company like a tightly knit special task force. He manages to maintain the emotional signature of a scene with the help of loud music and a former Marine weapons advisor now styled "havoc-and-mayhem coordinator." Then of course there's Dr. Feelgood for those mornings after "Caligula" Stone's bacchanals. Welcome to The Oliver Stone School of Filmmaking.



PART 1: the phone interview

Oliver Stone: Hi Stephen. I'm sorry for the delay but it's been a really crazy day. It's all Stanley Kubrick's fault.

Stephen Beck: Now what did he do to you?

OS: He's been taking Tom Cruise for almost a year to make a movie. [laughs] I just had a meeting with Tom and it went on and on, we had so much to discuss.

SB: Rumor has it that Tom was really upset because Kubrick made him do 48 jillion takes of one scene.

OS: I don't know. I didn't talk about the gory details but he is very happy with the movie and with Stanley. These are tough questions you sent me!

SB: Tough questions, easy answers.

OS: Well, obviously there are too many questions, and your pieces are kind of short and punchy, aren't they?

SB: Yes, but you know how it is. You have to get a lot of ore to find a few nuggets.

OS: Well, maybe I can find five nuggets.

SB: I'm hoping to get some insights into your creative process.

OS: Getting inside my creative process is going to be tough.

SB: I'm reminded of the comment by the non-objective painter Wassily Kandinsky in his book *On the Spiritual in Art*. He wrote about the "inner necessity" which drives artists to create, to overcome the inertia of material and themselves to create the final work.

OS: Is this an interpretive piece or a Q and A?

SB: Yes—I want to let you talk and then we'll edit the piece. I'm recording our conversation and once I've transcribed and edited the piece, I'll submit it to you for checking any quotes for accuracy.

OS: Run the quotes by me? Very good.

Then you write a little prologue for the piece?

SB: Yes, I sent a draft intro down for your review.

OS: It was quite nice. It motivated me to do this interview.

SB: Your recent appearance at the U.C. Berkeley Journalism Symposium with a panel of academic and documentary filmmakers discussed the topic of fact and fiction, truth and reality in filmmaking...

OS: Were you at the Berkeley symposium? They seemed to cut it off a bit early, just as the academics were warming up.

SB: If this had been Berkeley of the 60's we would have all been there talking until 2 o'clock in the morning.

OS: I agree. I think the panel was a little rushed, and many of the conclusions could have been developed more. Did you enjoy the show?

SB: Yes I did, and I was curious why you came up to Berkeley, into an academic forum, so to speak.

OS: Orville Schell, the Dean, is a friend of my former partner Janet Yang. He had asked me to help him out about a year ago so I said I would come up there one day. I like Berkeley, I respect Berkeley.

Did you hear about the commencement speech I gave there a couple years ago? It was a big forum with thousands of students and families, a big party on the grounds, and all these incredible coeds running around.

SB: There are beautiful women all over Berkeley.

OS: I'd never been to Berkeley in my life and there I was invited up to give a commencement speech. It was pretty heavy. I told a terrible Chinese joke at the start of the speech. I was just trying to be funny and it went over backwards, and the audience hissed me, so I had to overcome that to make the speech.

SB: I missed that little incident.

OS: The Chinese joke was very funny, and Chancellor Tien talks kind of funny, if you've ever heard him. I was just trying to imitate his voice, to re-introduce myself because he had made some mistakes about facts in my life when he introduced me. But I didn't realize that 85% of the crowd was probably Asian. So in trying to do a stupid accent imitation of him I pissed them off. It was so funny. I'm sorry.

SB: What do you know about Asian humor?

OS: Well Chinese-born are much different to me from American-born and raised. There's more political sensitivity here as opposed to a little more earthy, a little broader acceptance of humor there, which I associate with China.

SB: Is that one of the things which attracted you to Asia in the first place?

OS: You're asking me about 43 questions in a second here, and it's hard to answer them in a nanosecond.

SB: Well, OK, let me slow them down.

OS: I can give you code words, *code words*. Yeah, Asia, it's always been there. Since 1965 on it's been in my life somewhere, but I never expected it to grow so important and be a part of my life.

I have an assistant who is Asian, and a Korean woman is the mother of one of my

children. My recent business partner Janet Yang is Asian, and I have been involved with various businesses in China. I've lost a lot of money in China—actually that one I never told anyone before. [laughs] I lost some dough in China. I invested in a place. A lot of dough, a lot of money, a lot of my savings, after taxes you know. I was paying a large tax rate. I sunk a lot of savings over there, believing in future dreams. This was 3 or 4 years ago. And I've lost it all. Haven't seen a dime of it.

SB: Do you think Asian culture is going to take over Western culture?

OS: Talk to me! I need to see your eyes. I don't know if you're registering this. I don't even know if you are empathetic to my story. For all I know you are laughing at me and you're going to tear me apart.

SB: Well, I'm not here to take you apart. I'm empathetic to your story. I want to try to coax some interesting ideas from you.

OS: A lot of people write negatively about me.

SB: I'm not a negative person. I've lost a lot of money in ventures too, but I'm still an optimist.

OS: I just don't know. I've been fairly honest. When I talk in public forums I try to be honest, I expose myself and put myself in a position where I could get hurt. And some people have mis-used that and hurt me. What can I say? I guess it's the price of traffic, right? Your toll ticket... but it can really be painful sometimes.

SB: The sensitivity of an artist is like a raw nerved exposed. When you bare your soul in your work and then you stick around to hear about it, it's not always constructive or positive.

OS: The ultimate inequity is you put so much energy in over the course of making a film, a year or more of pure energy, it's all your best, the best of yourself, you've poured it into something. You never get that molecular response in the Universe, karmically you will never have an equivalent to it, electron-wise, energy-wise, quantum-wise, nothing.

So how can you do it? Even the applause would seem thin, if it were applause. And the damning would seem damning, the damning, the damning! Damned in Paradise! That was a great title for John Barrymore's life. [a book by Gene Fowler—eds.] ...It gets worse as you get older.

When you arrive to replace me, be awfully sure the plastic robot is sapient, cold, pedantic, and if possible a coward.

SB: I was hoping it got better.

OS: It gets worse in the sense that you're wiser, and you know more, you've had more experience. As a result you distrust having a new experience because you don't want to get hurt again. You get more wary.

Often a critic will say something, and I know he's not really serious, because if he really thought about what he was saying, he wouldn't really believe it. That's my feeling. **SB: What of your comments in the epilogue to your new book? You say that you are now trying to plant the seeds of joy. I thought that was very beautiful.**

OS: Wait 'til you read my book. If you call St. Martin's Press you can get it this weekend. I really want you to read it. Try to read it before Monday. It'll be a whole other conversation.

Publishing is another world—it's like a 19th century movement. Herman Melville and *Typee*. Trying to move 10,000 copies is a major effort. They published 50,000 copies hardcover of my book *A Child's Night Dream* which is very amazing for this kind of material. You'll see.

SB: Readers would be fascinated with a work from your early life.

OS: But I modified it through the older framework so to me it's acceptable now. They're saying things that embarrass me in there, and I'm a little bit ashamed, but you know I feel like, yeah, that's the way I was, that's the way I behaved. I really feel like I'm embarrassed by it, but at the same time I say, well, not really. It was you and that's the way you were. That's the way you really thought. Well, you were a little sick in some ways.

I accept sickness because it was part of a process. I'm trying to make the book, make my past life work for me. That's why I'm going back to your quote from Kandinsky. That's where your energy comes from, a certain narcissism, and a certain absorption with your own self energy because you're using that energy to explode outward. Like meteors, like meteors going out.

The thing that destroys the creative man the most is criticism. Criticism breeds self-doubt ultimately, or too much of it, constantly, as a given. Then you will automatically doubt yourself. It does you no good at all. You need to keep that energy clean and pure. And where does it come from? It comes from the darkest deepest most fertile spot of

the self—the mushroom. It's a mushroom, it grows in the dark I guess.

And what happens is you've got to get it out and trust it. That's all you have to do. You have your blind self, it's an instinct, and if you lose the instinct I believe you shit, I really do. Because I have been in both positions, both places. I took both forks.

SB: It's bad enough when the critics nail you, but when you know it's bogus...

OS: Why do we have so many spear throwers in our culture? Why is there so much negativity? Why do we have so many commentators that have to say something awful about somebody? Percentage-wise, if you look at all the columns written all across the United States in every magazine, newspaper or Internet, bet you most of the juicy ones are negative.

SB: Is it the mechanism of the market or is it human nature?

OS: It's true for me. As a kid, when you study the classics, you study about human foibles and greed and desire, you read all that stuff from an academic point of view. But little did I realize then what I realize now, and that's how much I under estimated the power of jealousy and envy in human life. Never got it until the past ten years! It's another book. That's what all these negative emotions derive from.

SB: Does it derive from the underlying puritanism of American culture?

OS: I think we blame ourselves from the day we are born. Le Ly Hayslip said that to me in her book, from which I made *Heaven and Earth*. Redemption and the ability to forgive. She forgives those who hurt her, and that's not a character you see very often in movies. Most characters get even and they go after somebody. In this case it's spooky because we automatically assume the negativity in this culture.

Only if you've been outside this culture... I've had the good fortune that my mother was French and I was able to spend time in Europe and later in Asia. It's a much softer clime in Asia, more forgiving between people.

In any strong Buddhist society, like Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam, parts of China, you would find a kindness that exists between everyday ordinary people that is really the engine of society. It's the beauty of having a society really.

SB: The formality of politeness?

OS: There's a formality, but at the same time there's a hidden part, things are not always out in the open. You're not on the Montel Williams show talking about your emotions, or your need for therapy—how you were psychologically abused—and so forth.

There's a lot of concentration on abuse in our society. You read about the father who beats up the child, or vice versa, but you don't know about the successful ones, how many fathers are doing a good job? A lot of them.

SB: Where are the heroes today?

OS: I think it goes beyond that. The heroes are in everyday life—everywhere. You have to be blind to not see it, but most people are. There are teachers, nurses, doctors, they're doing their job everyday making crucial decisions, people who are on the front line. It's going on all the time but we don't see it.

School for example, seems like a war zone in movies because it's more dramatic. And that's the falsification of the movies because they tend to exaggerate the problem for dramatic purposes. You can accuse me of such in *Natural Born Killers*, but I didn't feel that anyone had addressed that issue in the same way until then.

SB: Well, I wouldn't accuse you of anything. It's the most talked about film you've made in recent years. It's a stunning piece of work.

OS: It's misunderstood.

SB: All great work is misunderstood. Look at Galileo. The Pope threw him in prison because he was telling the truth.

OS: Galileo! [laughs] Say, I've got to get to a wedding by six. Let's continue this Monday. You're coming down I hope?



Because I will never be loved, as I am calculated to mystify, no, not until you pop the reinforced glass of my bulletproof showcase.

—Oliver Stone: *A Child's Night Dream*

The indians once told me stones are the most revered and ancient of recording devices, having

The scene at Illusion Entertainment seems pretty mellow for a late Monday afternoon. Giant color posters of all of Stone's films hang on the walls: *Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Natural Born Killers*, and *Nixon* most prominently displayed. A few pleasant, young film school types staff the office. A Chinese producer sits below several colorful action movie posters displaying Chinese movie icons, with one glass wall stretching out to infinity.

The view of the Pacific goes almost to Asia. Wild palms sway along the Santa Monica escarpment, that 100 foot drop-off along the Pacific Coast Highway that separates the LA plateau from the rest of the world.



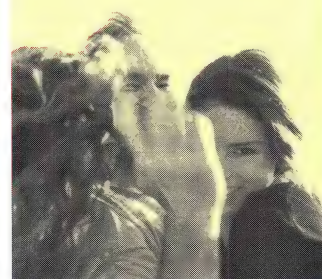
This is as far as you can go, final destination of the American dream. Go west young man, to LALA land. This is the edge, the end of the line, the bleeding, windward edge of the American Continent.

Here on the 6th floor, atop the westernmost office building on the West Coast, sits Command Central for Oliver Stone's dreamtrip machine, Illusion Entertainment. Headquarters for the Oliver Stone School of Film Making.

Praised and pilloried, lambasted by the press, Stone is one of very few movie directors to be "damned by fame"—to catch the public fascination in a way generally reserved for actors.



Toss the script of prepared questions out the sixth floor window, check your weapons, labels or preconceived notions at the door and go with the flow. This is Oliver **unmuzzled**.



Oliver wrestles Patricia and Kerry on the roof.



Part 2: **Oliverité**

[Stone is meeting with a production staff member about shooting the opening titles for *U-Turn*. *Mondo 2000* is tuning in]

Oliver Stone: What do you mean if something goes wrong?! Like what could go wrong?

STAFFER: What could go wrong is if there's a problem when they shoot the titles and they fuck it up. These things can happen. OS: [to Steve] People don't have any comprehension that directing is mostly behind the scenes work. You get through the mix, you're at the lab, you spend hours and hours and you're tired.

The point is, by the time a movie comes out the actors are all rested and they always do what they want to do. But the director has been working very hard, editing, finalizing

skiers who get in the gate. They would come up the line, they're like three away and get in the gate, and that was their moment. Then BOOM! They open the gate and you're down the course. Except that they *didn't* tell you there were like fourteen people with rifles aiming at you as you're going down, with bows and arrows. And they throw fireballs out there too, barbed wire, and a lot of shit like that.

I'm still in love with dialogue. That's been one of my things. I love Chayevsky, love having speeches in my movies, great monologues. I didn't put any monologues in *U-Turn* at all. The guy never stops one time to ask "Who am I?" or "What am I doing here?" It's all kind of fluid. Sean Penn is a very fluid actor. He's sort of playing himself here, or somebody close to himself. He did it without rehearsal. He came in fast. He replaced Bill Paxton within three days. He showed up the first day.

The first day I always shoot some road shots, and the guy had been up all night. It all takes place in 24 hours, the whole movie, and he's supposed to be driving all night, and he comes into town and blows his radiator out, and that's supposed to be the opening structure. And Sean shows up from LA totally wiped, he drove all night to Arizona. He'd been signed like three days before, and I think we made the deal about eight hours before we started filming, because he wouldn't start unless he had a deal.

it looked like a little boat, and he used it during the shoot sometimes.

SB: Was this at your instigation or did he just do it to get into the mood of the character?

OS: Oh, we were lucky to just make the deal. I was very concerned when Bill Paxton dropped out, and it's true that Bill called me back and said he would do it if I couldn't find anybody. But it was scary for a while, I didn't know if I had a movie or what—all that work, the whole cast and crew sitting around in Arizona. And you don't want to make a movie with the wrong person either, so who's gonna play your leading man when you're down to the wire?

SB: So how do you bear all this tension and still make a masterpiece?

OS: Thank you. I hope it is. But I knew I could play it myself at the end of the day! [laughter]

SB: Are you in *U-Turn* in one of your trademark cameo appearances?

OS: No, I never do that anymore. I'm too lazy because I hate wardrobe changes.

[Mondo Photographer Tom Pitts takes his leave...]

Tom Pitts: Thank you for letting me take your picture.

OS: Sorry I was talking all the time.

Tom: I wanted to give you this book by Peter Duesberg.

OS: Oh, that's all I need, more reading about AIDS. Jesus, what do you expect me to do?

Tom: Well he's saying that HIV doesn't cause AIDS.

When the prophets give out the stones must speak.—from *Nexus* by Henry Miller

the cut, right up to the release. We then have to go out and talk about the movie, we gotta defend it, it's a thankless existence. People don't realize that to be photographed on TV is a major pain in the ass.

SB: So the director is misunderstood?

OS: I don't want to sound like I'm complaining about it because a lot of people think it's a great job. But to go out and market the picture, that whole fourth phase of the movie business is the hardest for me, the most difficult.

SB: Is it luck and timing, as much as skill and being ready for the moment?

OS: Totally. That's the problem. There's so much media now written on movies, you feel like a heavily watched jockey by the time the film comes out.

Did you ever see the winter Olympic Games? I always feel nervous for those

It was one of those things, really loose. I don't think he even knew what scene he was shooting. He was driving to this location in the middle of Arizona, right! And everybody, the production manager, are up at 4 o'clock in the morning, saying "Is he going to make it? He'll never show up. The guy blew it out somewhere!"

So sure enough at 6:23 AM or something he comes rolling in in the fucking car, he gets out of the car man, totally wiped out, he'd been driving all night to get there. Did the cops bust him? I'm not going to say. So I say to him, "Why didn't you take a fucking plane, Sean?" No answer. I was thinking "What kind of contraband did he have on him?" What would *motivate* a guy to want to have his car around? He had this really cool car with big fins, a big, bad '67 Chevy El Camino,

OS: Oh really? What causes AIDS then?

Tom: He makes a really good argument that it was excessive drug use in the 70's by gay populations. And poisoning by drugs like AZT.

OS: So he says the immunity was let down by the drugs? What does he want me to do, get involved?

Tom: No, it's just a gift from my friend Kurtis Van Quill. There's a letter from him. And a pamphlet by Christine Maggiore.

OS: I thought it was from Christine.

Tom: No. Kurt's writing an article about it for the next issue of *Mondo*. This is really important information.

SB: Thank you so much Tom. I think we got some spectacular images from up on the roof, the wrestling. Bacchus wrestling with nymphs or dryads, Eris and Persephone. [Exit Tom]

SB: So tell us about your book, which you began writing when you were nineteen: *A Child's Night Dream*. Where did it come from?

OS: This book is about going through adolescence, going through the first major crisis in my life, first being conscious and being conscious in a literary way, because I read a lot. So there's a lot of big words but it's fun, it's done in a poetic kind of style. I would like to do an audio of the book. To me it reads best as poetry because there is a rhythm to it, a galloping kind of thing.

Gerard Manley Hopkins. Did you ever read his stuff? Well Eliot has his rhythm, Hopkins has his rhythm. In various chapters I have a different rhythm. Sometimes it's like the rhythm of Eliot, of Hopkins. Sometimes of Tennyson, because I always admired Tennyson.

SB: "Dear Mom"—the book is dedicated to your mother?

OS: No, that's just chapter four. It changes style you see. There's a thread to the whole thing. I went back after thirty years actually, at the urging of this editor Bob Weil at St. Martin's who really asked me to look at it because it was worth saving. So I took a huge mess basically, over 1200 pages—and I'd lost 500 or 700 pages or something—and I tried to give it a structure. So it starts with "America."

None of this was set in any order you understand, there was no beginning, middle, or end. New York. Goes to Yale. America Farewell in 1965. Then it goes Land Across the Sea. It goes to Viet Nam, Saigon, then it flashes back to France, goes to a hooker in Bangkok who the protagonist knows, and his name is Oliver Stone, but it's sort of like a third person Oliver Stone to me. Like another person, another country. And then war, and then the interlude, there's also fantasies he has, because all young men have fantasies. And then home. So it stretches mythologically really. He ends up in the Merchant Marines, then he ends up in Oregon, then another fantasy, which is amazing, of his whole life. And then this chapter called Final Things, which is an interesting conclusion to this movie [chuckles]—I mean what's in this book.

SB: Movie? Are you thinking of making your book into a movie? Is it your *Iliad*?

OS: No, it's not written like a movie at all. I did it because I had to do it. I had a strong passion at the time. A lot of my own work is in here. The desire for integrity, the search for God.

It's a rough world, kiddo. None of us gets out of it alive.

—Oliver Stone's father Lou Stone in *A Child's Night Dream*

[Looking over the book] I forgot I said all this. I've gotten a lot of letters from young people who told me that it had affirmed them in some way, because a lot of them are hungry, or how do you say, outside the norm. They don't know if they are OK. That's a big thing when you are young. You don't realize that a lot of other people are also going through a lot of pain and that helps you to understand that you are not isolated.

I was so isolated that I really was considered... sick. I damaged myself, I hurt myself unnecessarily in some ways because of my isolation. I took to negative thinking too much, and the energy was devoted to not believing I could ever be successful at anything—which is part of the reason I went into the infantry, to disappear.

SB: But you triumphed in the end. Your ability to put these feelings into words is a rare talent. Part of your work evokes these deep feelings in people which they don't want to acknowledge.

OS: This is good here, what I said: [after telling his father he was dropping out of Yale...]

"My father was furious. He said 'You're going to regret this for the rest of your life. What are you going to do with your life? You're going to be a bum! You think you're a writer but you're not.'" [from *Stone* by James Riordan, p.38]



The joy, the true joy for any working person in this matter is the creation of something that is special, that people would just appreciate. It doesn't have to be the most loved, it doesn't have to win the Academy Award, it doesn't have to be the best anything. It just is a good piece of work, like craftsmanship.

When you see a movie you just want to enjoy those two hours in the dark. It's a dream world that you enter into. A covenant with other people, the people on the screen and the makers of the film, to go on a trip —[laughs]—it's really simple. At the end of the day that's what's beautiful.

Did you like the movie? [*The Doors*]... [looking at the photos in the Riordan book, of his son Sean and others] ...look how fat he was!

He's much more beautiful now... nice pictures... I think Elizabeth gave them to him. Look how young Tom [Cruise] looks! [laughs] That's the wrestling scene [in *Born on the Fourth of July*]. Here's a great shot [looking at a photo of him, his former wife Elizabeth and son Sean]... it looks like a happy couple.

SB: It probably was at that time.

OS: It was.

SB: Happiness is very dynamic. If you can hold onto it you are very lucky.

OS: This is the real me. [Looking at two photos, one of him sitting at a manual typewriter writing JFK at his Santa Barbara home, the other, directing, showing Gary Oldman how to die like Lee Harvey Oswald in JFK].

Here I am taking the hit, acting out Oswald. That's my life story: these two pictures. [now looking at picture of Stone clowning with Jack Lemmon and Ed Asner during JFK]

That was a great moment working with Jack Lemmon and Ed Asner, and Walter Matthau was in the movie. I had such a trip. I brought those guys back, 'cause they hadn't done the Grumpy Old Men series yet. That came after *JFK*, you remember. They hadn't worked together in a long time, and I had seen them around and I

just wanted to work together because they were such heroes to me and my father when I was young. All those Billy Wilder pictures with them were fabulous.

I got to meet Billy Wilder and he treated me like a fellow director. He was very sweet to me. I was very flattered. It was a few years ago and we used to have lunch all the time, and I would try to write down afterwards some of the things he said because they were so funny. So I have a pile of notes on Billy Wilder lunches [laughs]. I said to him one day maybe I'll write these up—*Lunch with Billy Wilder*—a brief book of essays, like 67 pages... [laughs]. Few people talk like that anymore, like Billy. [calls to Rob, staff member] We need two things here: A bottle of water and frappaccinos—they're very bad for your diet.

SB: So what about visual language?

OS: I'd say it starts in the script. You and I are talking. Everything we are saying essentially is very interesting, to us in this moment in the first dimension because we are fascinated by the unpredictability of what's going to happen. But visually this is very static, probably a boring image—two people talking in profile at each other. How to make this interesting is a big challenge. I would go about it minutely.

I would first of all try to figure out, well the lighting's not bad, but try to get some decent light going. And also we have some views out the windows. [sweeping views of a trademark Technicolor California sunset over the Pacific Ocean] Obviously, we have some sculpture, we have an office, there's things to play off of.

But ultimately if it is going to work, we're gonna have to get to the words and the words would interpret for us. I would probably cut away to some of the concepts that are being illustrated. I might shoot, I could shoot this way [pointing into my face], I could shoot over, I could shoot into, I could shoot your lips, your eyes, your nose, the way of your habits, your manner of talking. I could pull back to a wide and have the whole room, and have that effect, bouncing off. Some tight singles or else overs. I also have a choice. I could shoot low, shoot high, I could shoot over shoulder, I could cut across the axis and shoot across your shoulders that way [pointing in another direction]. So I could combine a shot of you this way, this way, and then I have it cut this way and that way. I could do a split screen.

What I'm trying to say is that I've given you about fifty options of how to shoot this very normally conventional scene. Too many directors I find just don't look deep enough into their vision. A lot of directors are paying lip service to the plot, too. We all do. We have to keep the thing structured in a way that comes home and resonates. People just historically will not go too far adrift. They won't drift too much without having a feeling that they're going somewhere, that there's a thread. I personally enjoy mood films to some degree, I drift on them. But the mood has to be in tune with what I want too.

SB: Are you saying that the most interesting aspect of a scene is the controlled uncertainty?

OS: That's what Kubrick got. When I was growing up I felt that in the movies. Everybody else would shoot pretty conventionally, but when I saw Godard or Kubrick, in that period when I was studying film with more intensity, there was an unpredictability about Stanley Kubrick. Even when I was a kid, I didn't know what he would do next. It's a wonderful feeling, it's a very powerful thing. How do you recreate that unpredictability?

It's the way Kubrick looks at reality. His reality is supercharged. Some people say mine is very intense, too—no matter what I do it's intense. I could try to make a comedy and it would still be intense.

SB: Intense Comedy.

OS: That's a good title. Some people will say that *U-Turn* is an intense comedy.

I guess it leads back to: Respect the moment very much. Everything is sacred in a sense. There is no conventional moment, only that your mind will let it be conventional and turn it into an ordinary two shot. I hate that because you get into the editing room and I spend a lot of time working on a film and seeing it over and over again. The boring stuff always goes, it doesn't last. It's shallow. I could be wrong sometimes. My films have had every accusation, but rarely of being boring.

It's always working at something and you realize that it's working at something, it's provoking you. And that's the result of much refinement actually. Because you have to really intensify through those ideas. You have to live with the film for a long time as a director and editor. You are in there for an intense six months, and if something is phony in there it will bother you

until the day you remove it from the film. You may not realize it—subconsciously it's been phony. It finally takes the eighth screening perhaps to say *that's* what's been bugging you, you never bought that. Then you pull it out and you have to start over.

So it's a process of refining your own thinking—and that's not just verbally but also visually. Sometimes you think something is verbally brilliant but unfortunately it's not playing because it wasn't done right *visually*.

A director's job is never done. You could always do better. I guess the best director would have really, really thought through intensely every moment of the film, like Hitchcock supposedly did, and could just go right to it. But Kubrick takes a year to make his last movie and does fifty takes, so! And I know a lot of directors shooting, like James Brooks—he is very talented but I bet you he does a lot of takes. And Warren Beatty was infamous for that. So there is always room for analysis.

You can analyze something to life, or sometimes, unfortunately, to death.

SB: Death. Death and women. Death and Sex. Are they all related in your work? Don't the French have a saying for orgasm—*la petite mort*?

OS: Do they? It's a beautiful expression—too bad Americans don't have anything like that in their language. The small death, the lesser death, the smaller death, the little one before the big one.

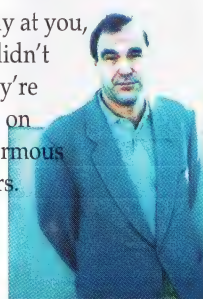
FORGIVENESS IS THE BEST REVENGE

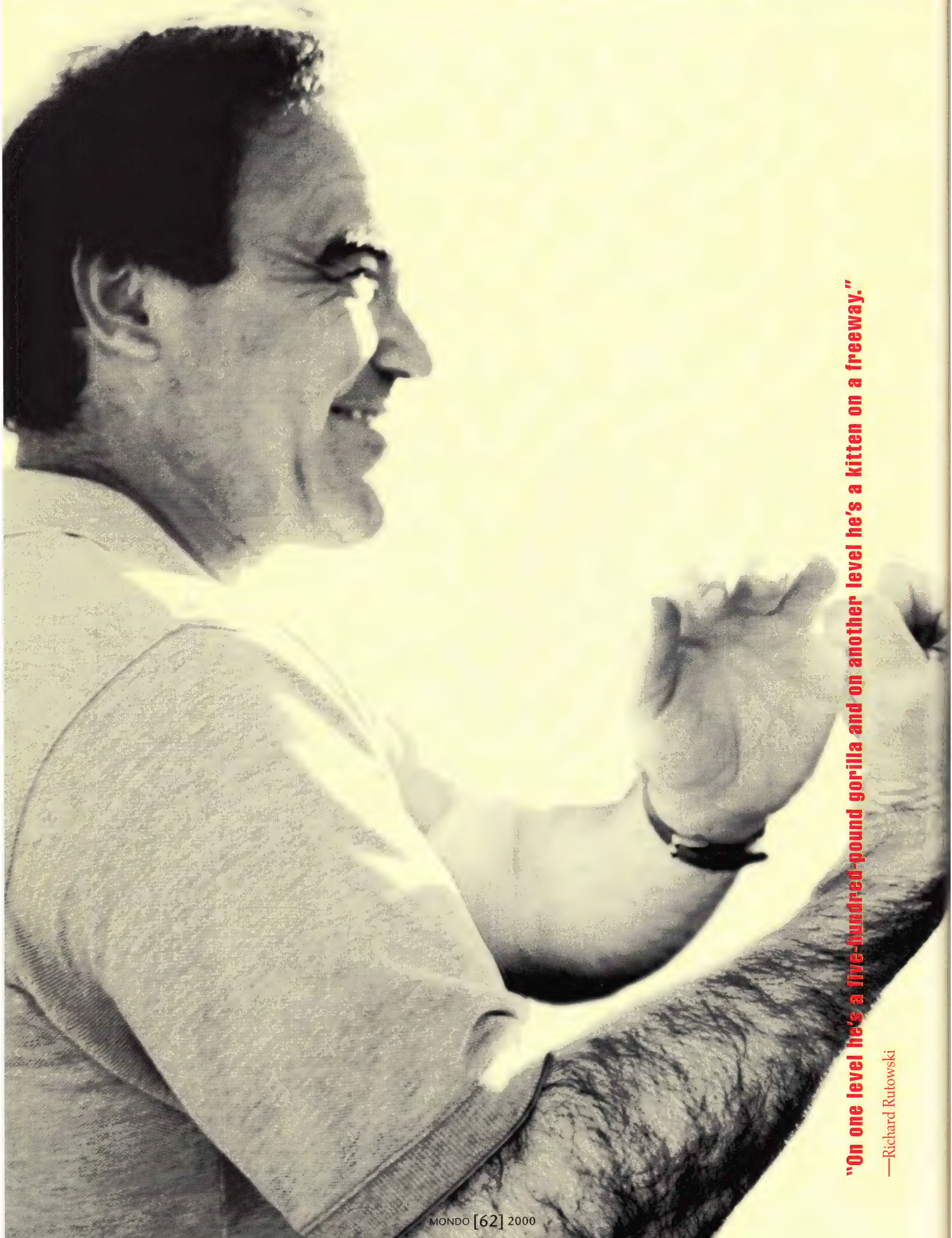
SB: How do you continue to maintain the momentum of your film making?

OS: I use the momentum to create more momentum. I had a good run of ten or eleven good years, and I made eleven movies. They were all tough movies, tough to get made, tough to finance, and ambitious. I'm glad I did it. And I knew at the time that it was a rare thing.

If you get the power from one movie, then use it. You will never feel right in yourself unless you use it to make something even more difficult. I'm glad I used the power I had when I had it, because they are very fast to take it away.

They're always chipping away at you, telling you that your last movie didn't make money, or this or that. They're always trying to put the negative on something. So I've gotten an enormous amount of hits in the last ten years.





"On one level he's a five-hundred-pound gorilla and on another level he's a kitten on a freeway."

—Richard Rutowski



It's a rough world, kiddo. None of us gets out of it alive.—Stone's father Lou in *A Child's Night Dream*

If I put it together in a computer—I might do that one day—it would be a tremendous cubic psychic energy that was launched to destroy me, to destroy my thinking. Very negative.

I didn't realize, I underestimated the power of jealousy, the power of envy, I really did. It was a big mistake. But you learn as you go.

I had a run, I did it. I took the success of *Platoon* and I was able to make *Born on the Fourth of July* which was smart. And a business movie called *Wall Street*. I took the amazing success of *Born*—thank God for Tom Cruise's involvement—and I turned that into a one-two hit, *The Doors* and *JFK*.

Now *JFK* was an impossible film to have made. Three hours with a very high degree of dialogue, at a cost of \$40-some million dollars. And it got done with a huge cast, a cast that worked for pretty much very little, except for Kevin [Costner]. And we did the movie, it worked, and that was amazing. I thought it would blow out at that. I did the right thing.

A lot of people I know, they get a success and they want to go out and make a more commercial picture. They're not really doing the work for themselves. They're doing it because they want to please their masters, or they feel like they're on a roll, and they don't want the luck to end by having cold dice. Well, everybody gets cold dice once in a while. It's how you handle it after that.

SB: When *Talk Radio* came out it wasn't commercially successful.

OS: [quick to interject] It was cold but I moved on quickly to *Born*. It was a small film, made for \$2 million. It got hurt the most.

I more or less used the *JFK* thing to make *Nixon*, which is an amazing thing to have made because it is a three hour political biography. It's serious, it's complicated, and it didn't make any money. The dice went cold. Partly because I think the character, the subject matter of Mr. Nixon is cold. They've hammered him, that was part of the problem.

The dice went cold, but I did a good thing with the dice, I played them, and I got two political pictures done that are antipodal. One's a biography, one's a search for the what history is—a tearing apart of the so-called reality veil. So they both got made, and that's an amazing run I'm telling you. I mean I can't complain.

Heaven and Earth, unfortunately, didn't do anything commercially either, and that really hurt me because I really put a lot into that.

SB: *Heaven and Earth* is a very spiritual film and it brings tears to your eyes when you watch Le Ly's struggle unfold.

OS: I still cry when I see that film. It's just beautiful. People say I dislike women—I love women! I mean *Heaven and Earth*... what do I have to do? I love that story! I love that woman!

SB: But your films will live forever, so despite its initial commercial failure, imagine audiences 30 or 40 years from now. The real excitement over some of your films may not come for decades. You might not be around to see it.

OS: How sad.

SB: But look at what happened to Van Gogh.

OS: Yeah, I wanna live like Vincent. That was a hard life man. What I'm saying I guess is a little bit like I've got to be a warrior. I realize that—really tough. You do get scalded alive here. Not only does the work get criticized, but often it is ignored or dismissed.

SB: Which is worse?

OS: Both. Both are bad. *Heaven and Earth* was ignored and dismissed. But a lot of people would still come up to me and say "that's the

most beautiful film ever made, the most spiritual." It's a Buddhist film actually, it really is in its spirit because it reflects her spirit, Le Ly.

The spirit of forgiveness, that was the beauty of it. I had thought "great story" because all western movies generally relate to revenge, to getting even. This girl, she took a lot of shit, but she won, she beat 'em. But how did she beat them? She beat 'em really by forgiveness, that's how she beat 'em. She didn't beat 'em by doing well, she didn't beat 'em by writing a book, she beat 'em by being able to accept those people who would hurt her, in her heart. And in her heart say "I forgive you and I wish you well. And I thank you for having taught me these lessons because in their own way they opened my eyes to myself."

That's a tough message to sell in a western society. That's why the Tommy Lee Jones character commits suicide. He commits suicide but in a weird way. He also becomes Buddhist in that he seeks the spirit. The little Wizard character then comes and tells her that he is still around, that he's checking it out. He dies naked which is a very Buddhist method.

SB: Yes, you quickly cut back to that image for a second glimpse, as if to ask the viewer, "Are you sure of what you saw?"

OS: People notice. It only does \$6 million or whatever, which is an art house gross. The point is, the film *does* get seen and certain people will really get it deeply. People like you, you saw it, you got it, and you relate.

SB: How can you judge what is a failure at that moment?

OS: You know what a failure is? When you know you sold it out, you know you didn't do it, you didn't complete it, you just didn't give a fuck. I know, it happens to directors, I've seen it. But it hasn't happened yet on these eleven films. Is it eleven or is it twelve? I forget already—in a row.

U-Turn is a new period in my life, having passed fifty. My book is out. That took a lot of time. I took six months off after *Nixon* to edit the book and to put it back together and to do some revisions here and there.

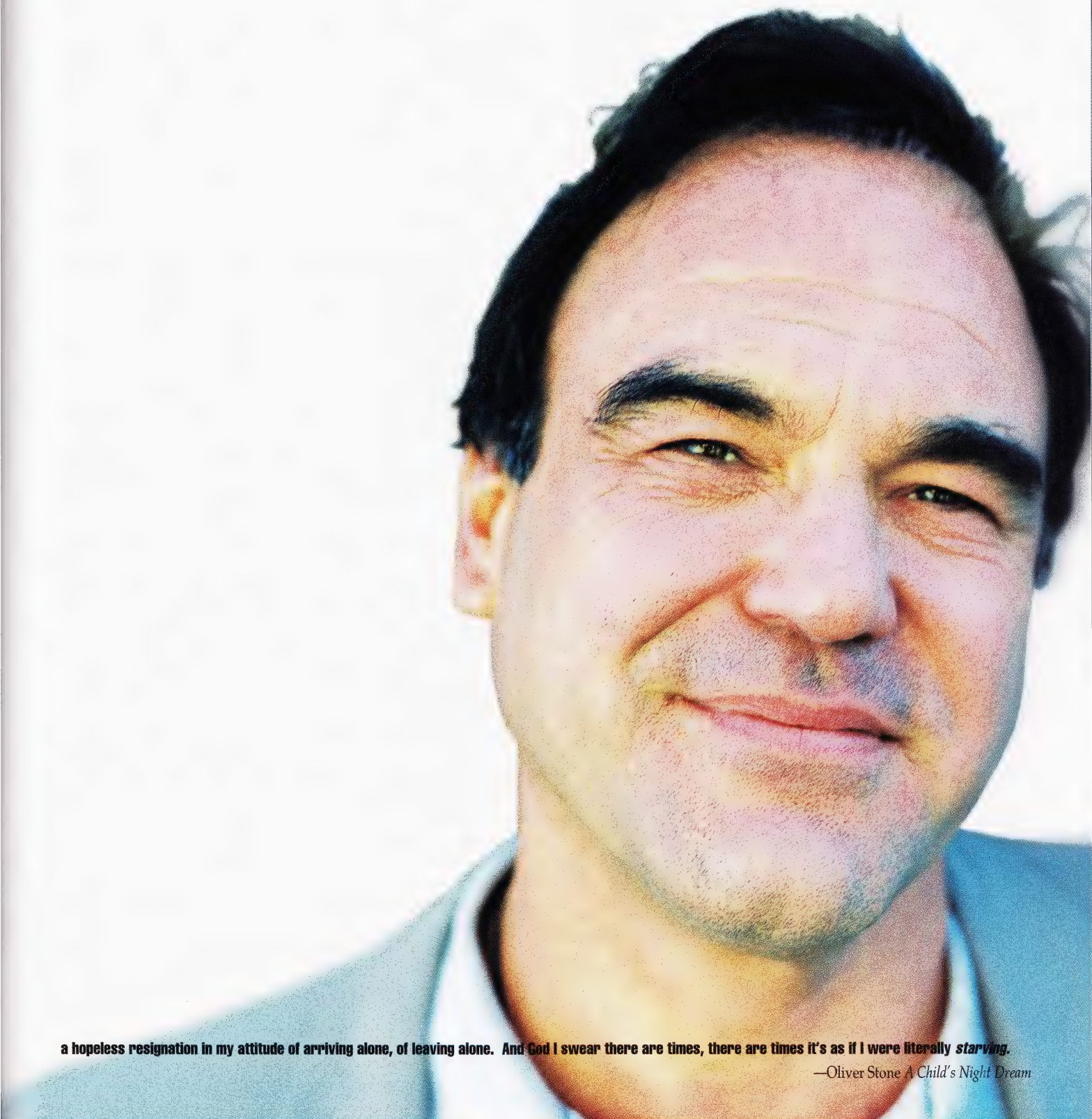
SB: As I scan the book, there it is again, death and women. Your portrayal of the harlot as temple. Is there any hope in this culture?

OS: I think we have to take the bargain we got. We were born into a highly privileged society. America. Volatile. Dynamic. Fun. Tremendous copy as well as fun to ride the seesaw. But the deal is we're puritanically split, that was always the deal. At the very beginning the Puritans got control, and they were always fighting from the get-go in American history. Prohibition is a disaster. Prohibition was a disaster for this country, and the Puritans put that one through. And it really led to a lot of the modern corruption and organized crime.

And the sex laws—the feminists missed the point in my opinion. They're always rappin' for equality for women, but they don't understand that behind it is sexuality, and it's the American, the Anglican view, of sexuality that has rerouted women. Here we are not sexually communicating the right way. People are not fucking enough, basically, and they are not fucking the right way.

The women aren't getting off and neither are the men. A lot of American men—I really feel sorry for them—they don't get enough sex. They get a lot of that Playboy fantasy sex—virtual and cyber sex is very popular—but they're not getting the *real* thing. They need a

I'm that way. I travel alone and I am so blind that I am not able or willing to differentiate between people, for they are all the same to me, creatures to be met, interrogated, and left behind. I am a lodestone without polarity, the mathematician who has reasoned out the odds and decided against. There is forever



a hopeless resignation in my attitude of arriving alone, of leaving alone. And God I swear there are times, there are times it's as if I were literally *starving*.

—Oliver Stone *A Child's Night Dream*

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little more Kama Sutra in their lives. The bed is 54 or 69 positions—whatever they say it is—it really is. You can have a great orgasm and you can have fun and you can fuck and you don't always have to fuck the same person to feel good, I mean you can too—but you don't have to.

So it's like dope. Talking about freedoms and permissions we allow ourselves. Thank you very much but I don't need some government to tell me what my joy can be or not. But we do accept those traditions now. Our forefathers cut a deal. We live in society, therefore we put up with condoms and with the laws of sexuality which put many of us behind bars—for drugs and sex. We have so much violence because we don't have good sex.

SB: You open JFK with Eisenhower's 1960 farewell to office speech warning the country to watch out for the military/industrial complex.

OS: Eisenhower is an interesting man. He went through a lot. He was hardly a liberal. He was an extremely conservative man. So why would he stop after eight years of basically a victory? He'd won, he got out, he had done the game totally. He had achieved everything that Doug MacArthur, his one time chief, had wanted to and failed. He'd become everything that George Washington would have dreamed of. He was a George Washington figure in many ways.

But Dwight was at the heart of much of that National Security State shit and saw it first hand. Why would he stop after eight years? Why would the most profound wisdom he could pass on to us be that statement? Because he saw something coming that was far worse than he knew was BAD for the country. And that's what makes him a fundamentally decent man. *[laughs]*

My dad was right about him. And of course the apologists, all those people like the regressives of the world, they said "He didn't say that. He really meant that..." They always come up with another meaning for what he said. But it's not true, that's what he said. He *warned* us. Period. He warned us about a group of men and companies and corporations that would endanger our freedoms. Period.

SB: Are you saying the image streamers, the media corporations control us? You have said that whoever controls the memory of a nation controls its destiny. Why are people shown the images they are?

OS: Actually JFK was one of the first pictures to go after the media. Chayevsky's *Network* did too, and was effective I thought, but somehow was embraced more by the media. You can't watch that movie without asking, why didn't the press do something? It's a naked finger in their face.

SB: It's reached the point where you've become so iconized that in the movie *Conspiracy Theory* the Mel Gibson character rants about you and your conspiracy theories, and that you worked for the CIA and George Bush, and that "they" still let you make those films, even though you know so much. Are "they" now propagating misinformation about you as such an icon?

OS: *[with a frown on his face]* They got onto that right away. If you notice how ridiculous the media has gotten, how desperate to say that Oliver Stone-believes-that-Elvis-is-alive, that's basically what they are saying. They've lumped us all together.

I would go the other way and say that you have to be a troglodyte or dinosaur to stand by the single bullet, the single assassin theory, given all the evidence that has come in. Not to doubt it would make you either a fool, a moron, a retard, or else a conspiracy person—a conspiracy against allowing the truth to come out.

DAMNED BY FAME

OS: You asked what am I going to do next. I don't know. It's going to slow down a little bit. I'd like to do something major. See, it's a question of energy. I just can't bang it out like I used to. I mean it's too much. Part of the energy comes from being new and being unexpected. They don't know what's going to come next, it's a surprise. But unfortunately a lot of that element is robbed, denied me, because I'm always being watched, and labeled and categorized. It's a drag.

So avoiding categories is part of the game, camouflage is part of the game, never signaling too much, being smart, talking one game, going the other way. What's that famous strategy in Sun Tzu: *The Art of War*. You know, you kind of get the eye going that way and then do that. [cross-pointing with his eyes and fingers] Fooling the eye.

Every project I would try to develop would get around. I would normally be developing four, five, six things at one time. Sometimes you're writing it, or another person's writing it, but it takes time, a year, two years. Well, of course with me they announce everything within a week. Like I'm doing this movie, it makes national headlines, you know. But they don't realize that this is like an R&D business, too. You research and develop ten things, and then you come down to producing only one. No one takes that into account.

I get letters from all over the world on a continuing basis. "Oh, I hear you're doing this story of, ah, Houdini. I knew Houdini." "I hear you're doing the story of every single man in jail for-any-kind-of-noble-reason." —I've gotten a letter about it. It's unbelievable, I can't answer all the mail, I can't deal with it. There's just too many people out there who are hungry for justice. They see me as a *justicier*—a man who seeks justice—somebody who can do good. I have prisoners write me with awe, like I have such power. "You can do a movie and get me out of here and change the whole world." People look to you with big hopes.

I have so little power because as you know the studio heads have the real power. Directors, we're just gladiators in the arena and if you lose a couple of films in terms of financials, they'll slaughter you. They like to two-thumbs down you, man! [growling] "Stone is over the hill. It's about time it happened to him, man. This guy is good

for nothing. I'm glad he failed." All that ugly stuff. It's another game.

The point is I guess, less energy. Make it count more. You gotta be smarter about it. So you take your energy and you get ready and when you go—I mean I'd like to do something BIG. I'd like to do something that I can maybe go out on and say "this is the last film I do." That this is the ONE. I'd really like to do something that sums up everything I stood for, if I can, at the turn of the century. Whatever.

Then go to Asia all the time, full-time [laughs]. No I'd come back here. I like the States, I like the energy. I get it.

SB: Here you're on the edge of the Pacific...

OS: I'm often over there—also Europe, my third choice. I'm not including Australia. [musing] I don't know if I'd consider Australia a choice. **ME**



Webography

<http://globetrotter.Berkeley.edu/Stone>
"Conversations with History" interview
May, 1997, by Prof. Harry Kreisler of
Berkeley's Institute for International Studies

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/Stone/stone-grad1.html>
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jaobrien@mindspring.com
Fan email

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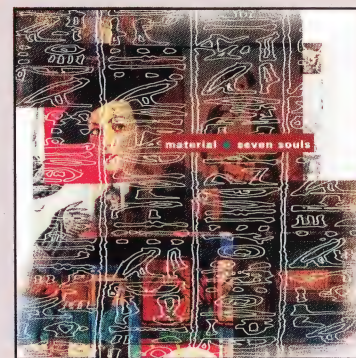
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1697 Broadway, New York 10019
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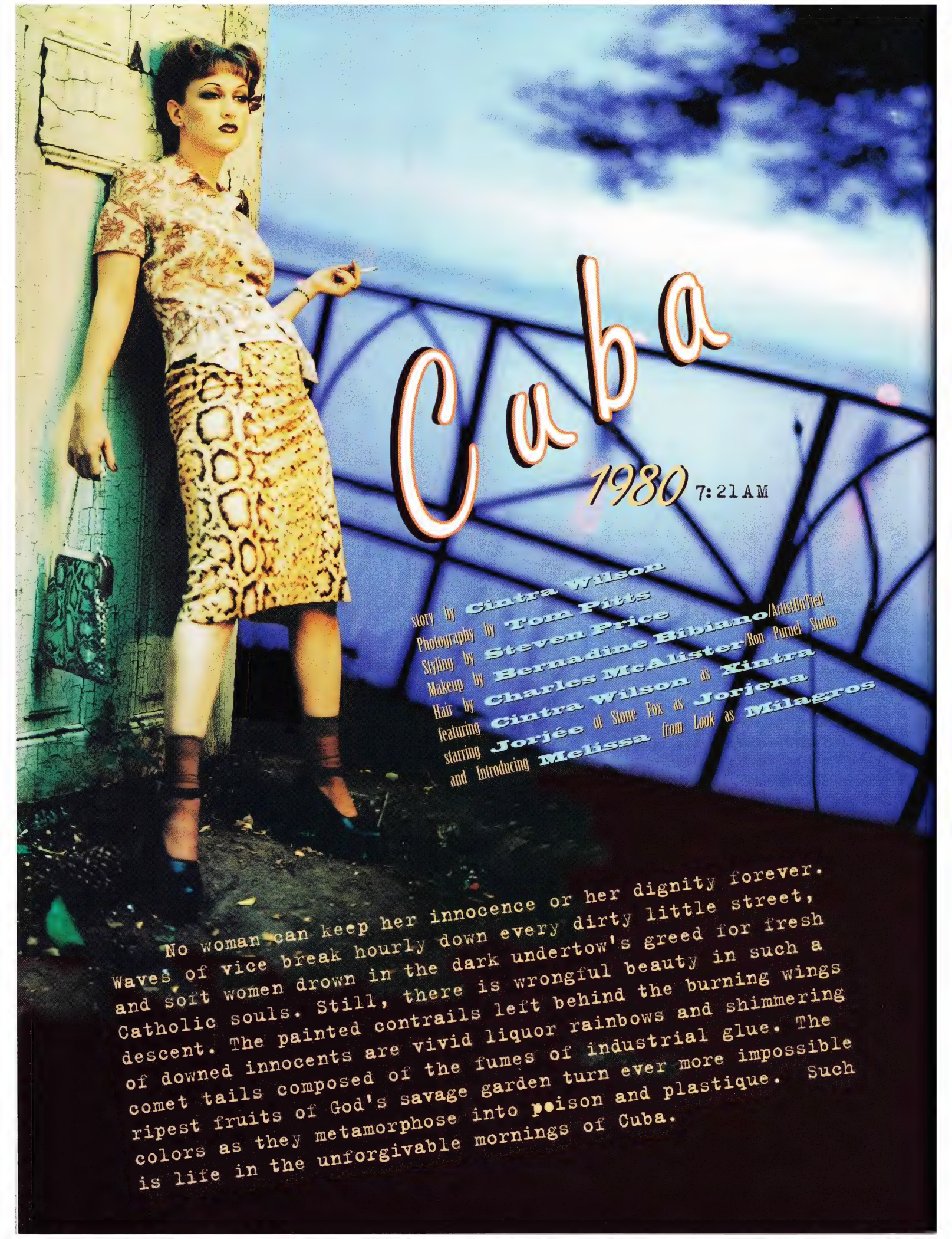
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Cuba

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story by **Cintra Wilson**
Photography by **Tom Pitts**
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Hair by **Charles McAlister** / Ron Purnel Studio
featuring **Cintra Wilson** as **Kintra**
starring **Jorjée of Stone Fox** as **Jorjena**
and Introducing **Melissa** from **Look** as **Milagros**

No woman can keep her innocence or her dignity forever. Waves of vice break hourly down every dirty little street, and soft women drown in the dark undertow's greed for fresh Catholic souls. Still, there is wrongful beauty in such a descent. The painted contrails left behind the burning wings of downed innocents are vivid liquor rainbows and shimmering comet tails composed of the fumes of industrial glue. The ripest fruits of God's savage garden turn ever more impossible colors as they metamorphose into poison and plastique. Such is life in the unforgivable mornings of Cuba.

Xintra, The **Betrayed**

Decency is easily forsaken when the mocking Gods steal
from a woman that which she holds deepest in her heart...

The 4 Stages of Cuban Grief



1. Denial



2. Suspicion



3. Anger



4. Revenge

Milagros,
The **Tempted**

Desire, the earth's most insidious toxin, is
its most deadly when it chains young girls to
cads and liars.

"I have promise my father to save it
until I am a married wife, but....okay."



"Perhaps no. Perhaps not unless you
give to me your Timex watch which
glows blue like the horizon when
you press the magical button."

Torjona

The **opportunist**

The meek suffer with Jesus
while bad women grow rich.

"You will trust in me, I have your passport."

"The tomato
is best
tasting when
stolen from
the cart of
the enemy."

"I will bite
into it such
as I would
bite into your
shrunk head."

"In my bag are many tricks señor.
You may use their magic with good
purpose such as the Indians do,
or merely for sudden pleasures
which please none but the Devil.
How many would you like?"



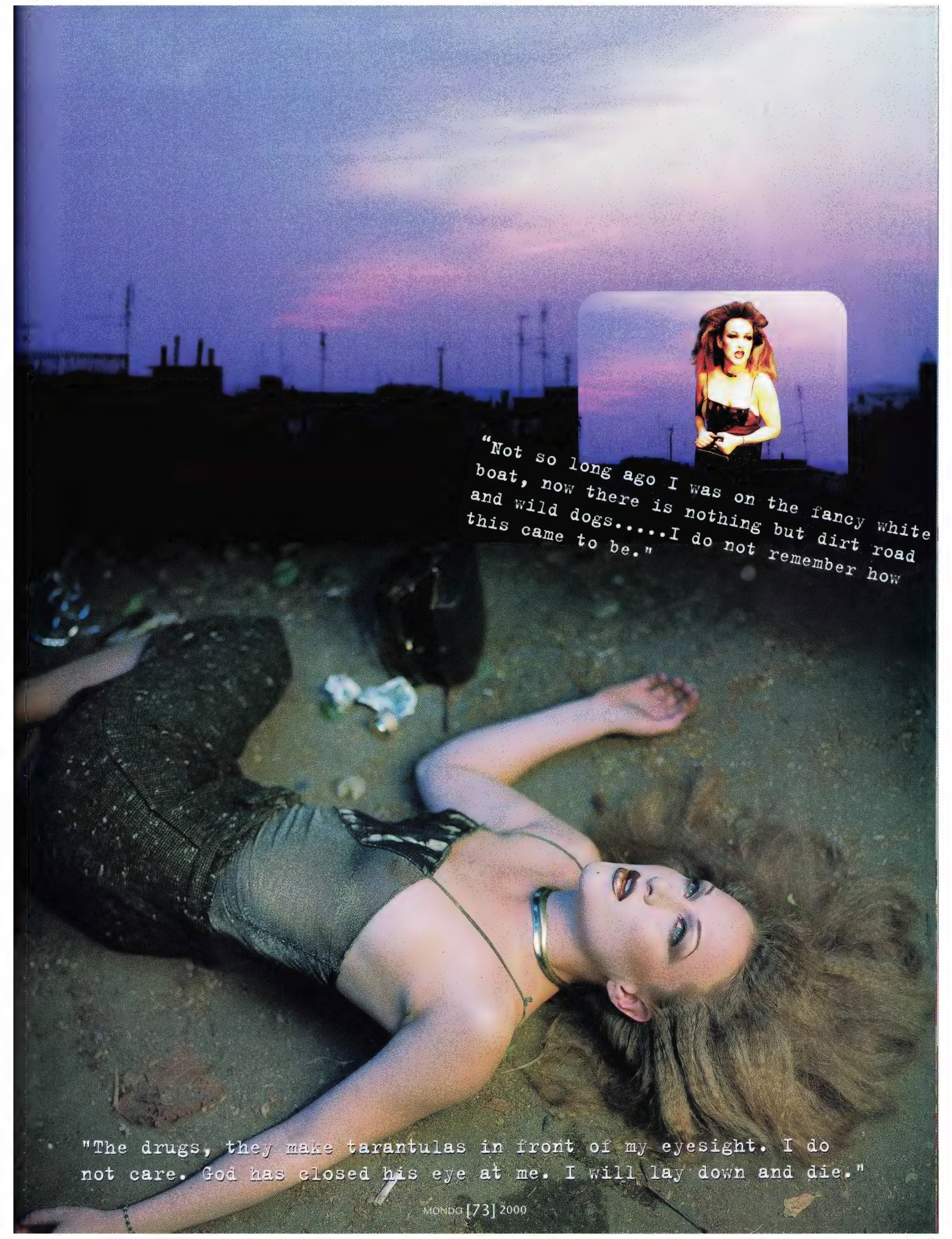
Xintra.

The **Abandoned**

When one compromises but a teaspoonful of their morals each day,
how quickly one becomes accustomed to the most venal sins!

"why does the limousine pull away
when I have only been several minutes
in the gas station restroom?"





"Not so long ago I was on the fancy white boat, now there is nothing but dirt road and wild dogs.....I do not remember how this came to be."

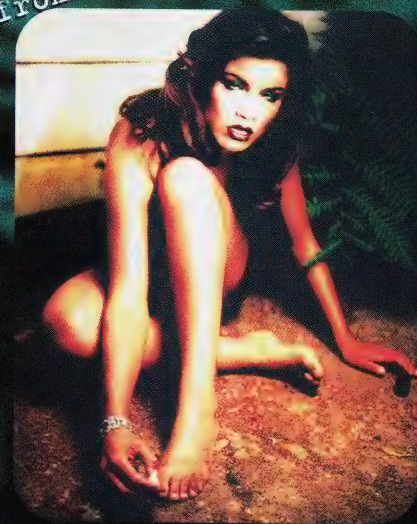
"The drugs, they make tarantulas in front of my eyesight. I do not care. God has closed his eye at me. I will lay down and die."

Milagros
The **Regretting**

Once such a girl squanders her innocence,
she quickly becomes aware that it was
her only asset.

"I feel that you have used my
girlhood like a napkin."

"You have ruined me, Valdino,
look. Look between my toes for
the serpent's bite, the marks
from the needle."

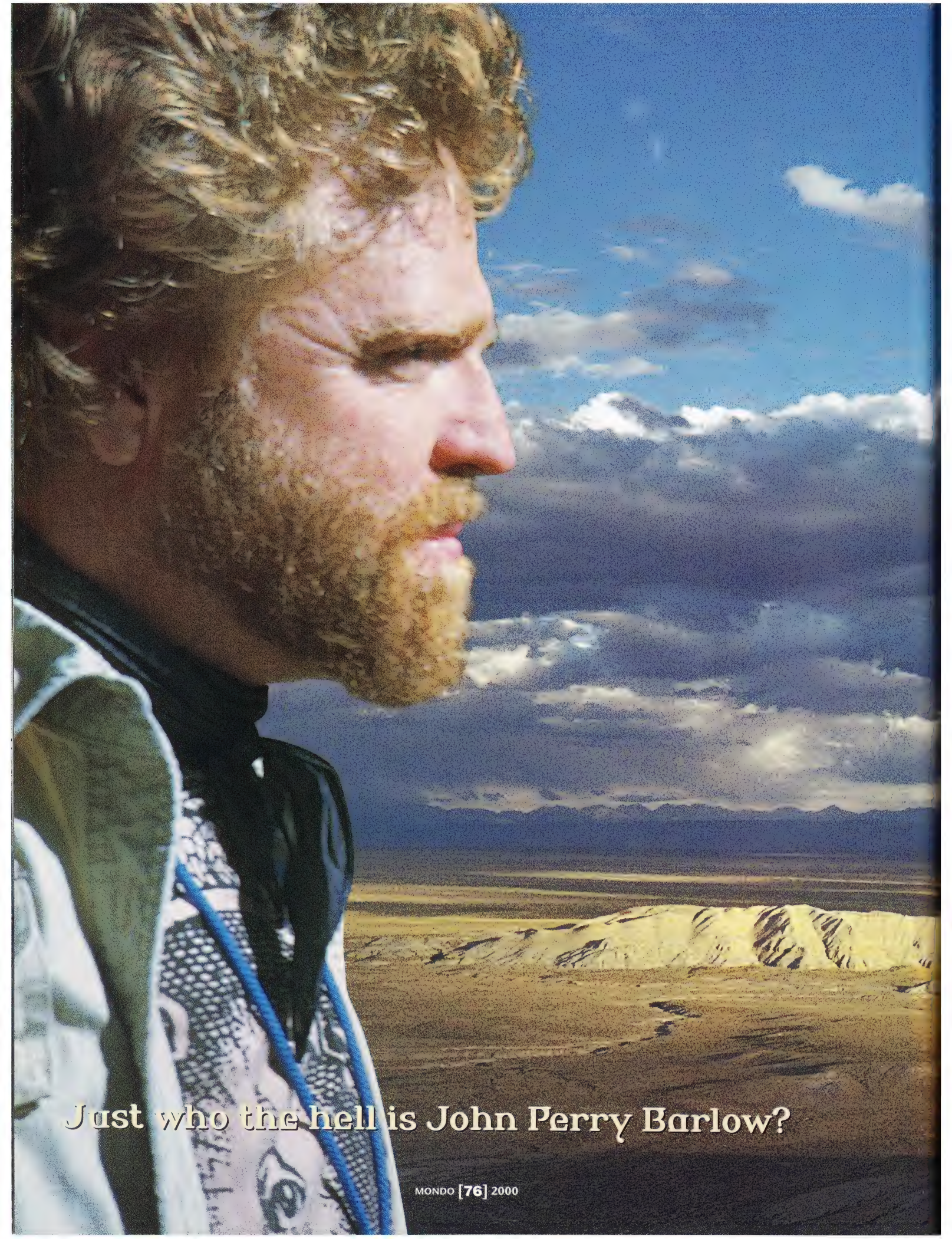


"I will chase you through the
streets and peel you with my own
fingernails for the disgrace you
have brought on my family!"

Jorjena, The **Victorious**
In the constant battle between goodness and evil, evil has won again on this Cuban morning. The blinding sun beats down on both the fallen and the saved indiscriminately by mid-afternoon causing both types to seek relief in the shade.

"Thank you for your business, señor. Unfortunately, you have no credit with me. I suggest you sell your shoes."





Just who the hell is John Perry Barlow?

Anarchist, Republican, acid eater, cowboy, Electronic Frontier missionary, sophisticate, Mondo contributor, CIA consultant, writer of stentorian Jeffersonian screeds, a man as comfortable rambling the streets with indigent crazies as he is stalking the haunts of the rich and famous.

Barlow showed up on the Mondo doorstep as we were just gearing up in '89: A Grateful Dead lyricist and jack mormon pater familias, fresh from his stint as a married gentleman rancher in Pinedale, Wyoming, and rearing to get into the wind—little did we know how much wind.

About those screeds: this is the maverick statesman who wrote "Everything We Know Is Wrong"—a modest book proposal which ruffled feathers in high places. Whose vision of the future would make the movie *Brazil* look like a day at the beach. Who foresaw a future economy entirely based on omniscient totalitarian bureaucracy, a legion of finking "little brothers," every mother's son a "knowledge worker."

A man of split dichotomies: a maverick, antinomian and hero to his tribe. The man who once wrote: "To serve my tribe as a hero would, I should have carried my virulent insights right into the belly of the beast. I should have gone straight to the captains of order and started howling like Hunter Thompson on bad acid."

That Barlow would accept invitations to lecture the CIA came as no surprise. I mean, we're sophisticated people here. Anyway, we like to think of Barlow as *our* agent, our man on the inside. Which is why I proposed debriefing him in the pages of MONDO and was delighted when he acquiesced.

Beyond an amusing glimpse of the nerve cell of the CIA he doesn't really reveal anything *too* damning. I'll accept, for the most part, that it's because he hasn't actually noticed anything too specific. As you'll note, JPB will start waxing philosophical at the drop of a hat. A man like that, always thinking about the big picture, occasionally misses the details. Oh well. Mondo has decided that Barlow makes a lousy intelligence agent but we'll keep him around as a visionary.

BY R.U. Sirius

BARLOW
DEBRIEFED

GET SMART

R.U. Sirius: You've spoken at a few CIA conventions and advised them?

JOHN PERRY BARLOW: I've been called in on a few occasions to give some back-up to certain forces within the CIA. There's a minority within the CIA who strongly believe they've missed the information revolution in a fundamental way. They realize that they don't understand how information really works. And they're genuine about their mission, their mission being to try and come up with the most realistic possible picture of what's going on in the world so that the administration can make decisions based on reality rather than fantasy. The problem is that they created a purely Sovietic information system. It's completely compartmentalized and has layers and layers of secrecy. And this makes it impossible for them to determine truth, or to have the kind of process where you discover the truth. You want to expose a phenomenon to the widest possible range of peer reviews and different points of view and then come up with a consensus

great big lazy susan, each of them with a large teletype machine sitting next to them. The teletypes are clattering away, and they tear off these printouts from the teletype machine and put them on the lazy susan, and rotate it around to another analyst who might be interested. It's unbelievably primitive! There are five screens on the wall. When I was there, one of the screens was showing static, and the other four were showing CNN. And while I'm standing there in this supposedly electronically-hardened environment in the nerve center of the CIA, my cell phone rings. [laughter] There was a terrible flurry of embarrassment. I wanted to say, "Yes Ivan, I'm here. Code 9, 11, 10. Blue Moon." They're completely inept. They're still passing around information in that building in pneumatic tubes, like an old department store.

RU: They have to be aware that there's been a tremendous technical evolution in information processing. I mean, they're not living in fucking caves!

JPB: There's a little pocket that's quite advanced. But no more advanced than the average Silicon Valley company. If you want to

based on what the truth might be. They can't do that because of all the secrecy. So there are some folks now who represent another view. They're very interested in a new open system for both information gathering and dissemination. I was involved in the efforts to get them on the web. You can't imagine how resistant they were to that.

RU: They *do* have a web site...

JPB: They have a web site and it's chock full of good stuff. If you want to get the latest maps of politically boxy regions like the Balkans, that's the place to go.

Anyway, they're interested in declassifying also. And there's a lot of resistance. The problem is that the whole process of declassification involves shortening the length of so many bureaucratic penises. Inside that system, the way you enlarge your dick is to have the capacity to declare as much stuff secret as possible. The actual sensitivity of the information is far less relevant than your ability to declare it sensitive. And you can imagine what kind of mentality that breeds. One of them said to me, "What we're trying to do is *determine* reality".

So, I got into the nerve center of the CIA. You'd imagine some kind of James Bondian reality... massive parallel computing with the entire world's information and all this secret stuff... But the nerve center of the CIA is five analysts sitting around a

see some genuine technological sophistication, the one thing they do have nailed is satellite systems. They have developed some sophisticated systems. They're taking pictures from space with resolution down to the size of a cigarette pack. The problem is that they have all this information and they don't have any capacity to render it intelligible. They evaluate their effectiveness by how many images they have. So what?! It's like how the Soviets used to evaluate the success of their programmers. They'd weigh the computer chips. [laughter]. They focused so thoroughly on the other side for so long, they became it. There's an old Arab proverb, "Choose your enemies well; for you will eventually become them." That's precisely what happened. The pictures on the wall in the CIA are of scenes inside Russia. Even the wallpaper in some places are old maps of Moscow!

RU: They're in love.

JPB: They're madly in love, and their lover has died. They're in a profound state of mourning.

RU: What other insights do you have into the power struggles that are going on there?

JPB: I think the big problem remains the fact that their admissions system is set up to optimize value sets and experience base that are purely those of the WW2 generation. So even though very few members of that generation are still in there, they've been replaced by people who are able to replicate those value sets. And they're increasingly unusual in society. They're the kids that nobody got along with in school.

RU: Another group of nerds.

JPB: Yeah. They're socially maladjusted. They're paranoid. They're too smart by half, and they're as straight as you can possibly be in a society that isn't really very straight.

RU: Militia-type publications have been claiming that there's this fifth column in the CIA that's been gathering information

a few of the people there would confess frankly that they agreed with me. Finally this one guy said to me exasperatedly, "Look. We're more afraid of the NSA than we are of you."

Well, why is the White House afraid of the NSA? Isn't the NSA supposed to work for *them*? Anyway, they're not going to go out and kill him.

RU: It might have happened once before...

JPB: But it's unlikely. I think it's more that they have files that would be very damaging. This is an old trick...

RU: The Hoover trick.

JPB: The Clinton Administration has launched the greatest attack on individual liberties in my lifetime, and that includes the Nixon administration. And it's all been done under the wire and in ways that are so technical and legally obscure that people haven't even noticed. They're doing severe long-term damage to freedom in America in a way that never makes the radar. And people don't know about it. Because it's not the O.J. trial.

RU: They have that anti-terrorism bill...

on corruption in politics and using it to blackmail corrupt politicians. And this is why so many of them have been quitting. Do you know anything about this?

JPB: I'm not privy to this, but I

believe it more or less. I think it's one of the

reasons that

Clinton has been so spineless. It's

because they've got him in a lot of ways.

I'll tell you something.

When I was around the

White House petitioning against the Clipper Chip

(government-sponsored encryption scheme to

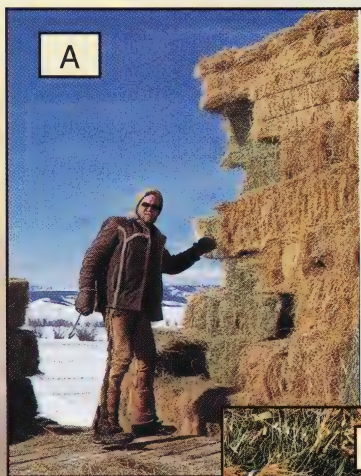
eliminate freely available

strong public encryption),

JPB: A beautiful case in point. They pass an anti-terrorism bill after an incident that might have been *caused* by the federal government! I'm not paranoid enough to think that they actually blew that plane up in order to keep their jobs, but I'm getting there. You just have to ask yourself: Who benefits? Who is going to reap the most from these incidents? It's the obsolete cold war state. That's a lot of people who need to make their car payments. They don't want to quit working. They have to have a justification for being employed. And it's not out of the question that some of those people figure they'll produce a justification.

RU: We're never going to figure out what's going on. It's gotten too complicated. We're never going to know who killed Kennedy, because we're into such a media babel. If you *proved* who killed Kennedy, there would still be enough *disinformation* around to raise public doubt. Nobody can get to the bottom line on anything.

JPB: There are so many wheels within wheels within wheels... Also, the way that information is managed inside the governmental apparatus is so compartmentalized. Everybody's sitting on their own little pile of information. There's no way even within the system to gain access to any large percentage of it. I don't care if you're the head of the CIA, there's an awful lot of information that you can't get to.



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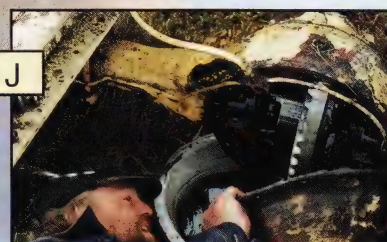
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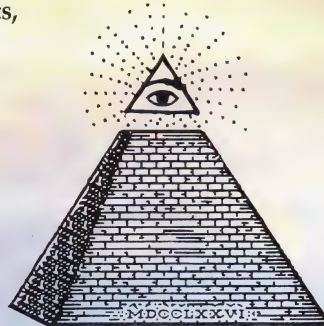
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J



RU: I thought about that when John Deutch was denying that the CIA was involved with cocaine. Everybody on the street knows that the CIA has been involved in drug dealing all along... because you know somebody who got mixed up with them somewhere down the line! But maybe Deutch *doesn't* know.

JPB: People on the outside don't get that these organizations *really* aren't great monolithic entities where there's uniformity of knowledge and opinion. They're as filled with internal politics and conspiracies and intrigue as the court of the Medicis. And there's an awful lot going on inside that never sees the surface. You've got to go in to see it. And there are many people inside the CIA that *you* would find compatible.

RU: I THINK NOT! Have you ever talked to your close friend John Kennedy Jr. about the assassination of his father and what his opinion is about who did it?

JPB: Yes. He said he could think about it, but what good would it do? It wouldn't change anything. He could go down into that black hole of confusion and anxiety, but he has a life to live. It's unknowable. And if it were knowable, what difference would it make now? He's a healthy guy in a situation that would drive most to psychosis.

NO HIPPIES IN THE WHITE HOUSE

RU: You've flown on Air Force Two with Gore and talked and hung out with insiders in the Clinton Administration. Tell us about any weirdness... drug use, closet hardline leftists, sex orgies... anything really weird or interesting.

Barlow's home town. g) Barlow always does things in a big way (stack built by Steve Kromer, It'll Do Custom Stacking Co.) h) Barlow trapped by his hay-stacking sweep 1987, Sublette County, Wyoming. i-j) Everything's broken, all the time. Replacing a differential in a '47 International Harvester, when the nearest part store is 250 miles away, is all part of a day's work. k) Barlow, Ken Kesey and Jon McIntire do Dylan and the Dead, Eugene, OR, Summer 1987. l) November 1996, pre-coffee preparing for an Election Day speaking engagement. m) Backstage at the Dead, Oakland Coliseum, New Year's 1990.

JPB: Unfortunately, it's duller than you want it to be. I've not been privy to any really fascinating internal demons running around loose in the White House. These are all technocrats. Their private lives are just as dull as you'd think. I mean, Al Gore's advance man's a devout Deadhead and Ram Dass' nephew. But he's a very straight young man and a true believer.

RU: What do they believe in? I still can't figure that out.

JPB: I think they believe in benign authority. But once you believe in authority, and once you believe that the federal government actually connects to the ground in some meaningful way, that justifies a lot of behavior that you wouldn't be able to justify if you looked at things clearly and saw how perversely the effect deviates from the intention. It's not as if the story's connected to the writer.

NEWT MORNING

RU: I have a very unpleasant subject to bring up... Newt Gingrich. You've said some nice things about him. So what is there to like? He wants to hang drug users in the public square. He's helped to increase the military budget. He tried to censure Torricelli when he brought out revelations about CIA torture in Guatemala. I could go on and on...

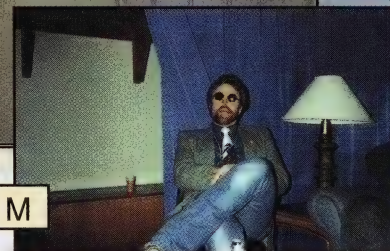
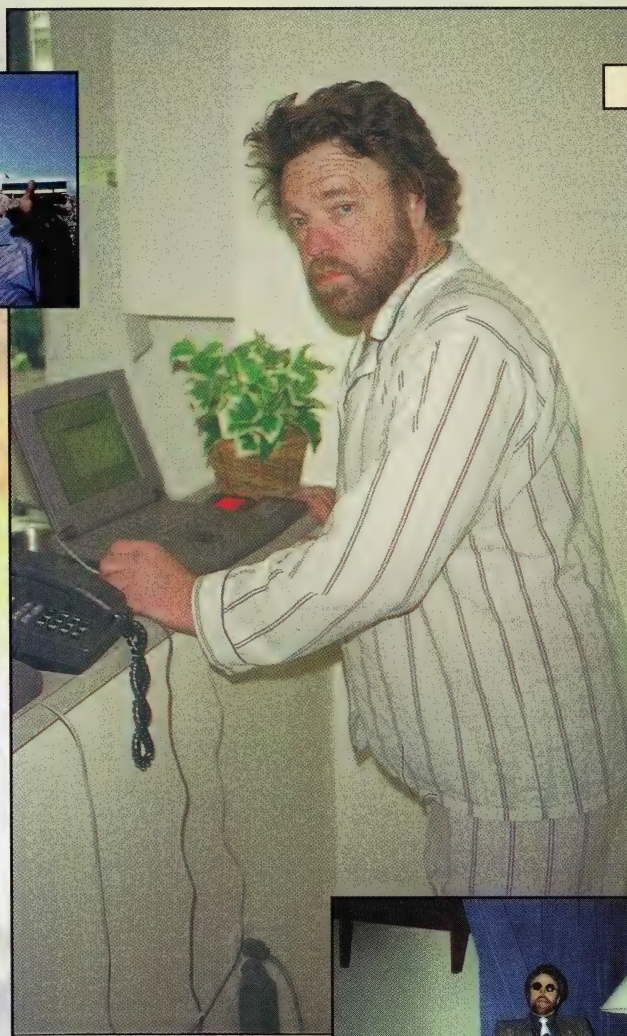
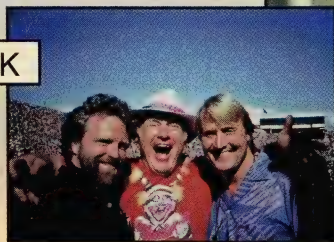
JPB: Gingrich is another one of those faces where the balloon he has over his head, the great virtual myth, is greatly at variance with the guy himself. And the characteristics of that balloon have to do not so much with the policies of belief, but the policies of belief that he remains silent about, because he's trying to hold together an incredibly shaky coalition. He's holding together two halves of the Republican party that hate each other. The party consists of fundamentalist authoritarians and laissez faire libertarians. And there are some things they agree on about limiting the size of the government and the uselessness of the welfare state as it's been constructed. In a sense, he's trying to do the same thing that Roosevelt did when he tried to hold together a coalition of inner city blacks and Southern racists. They have no natural affinity on many levels, but they have some points of agreement.

RU: He's front man for all the individual rights-busting Draconian crime bills... the prison/industrial complex.

JPB: I don't want to portray this guy as a hero. I think, in some ways, he's a great person. One of the questions I asked him when I interviewed him for *George* was, "You and I both know that crime has been declining for a long time but, because of television, the perception is that it's increasing. And the people are asking to build more prisons and get tougher on crime. Don't you feel some sense of moral responsibility to do what's right?" And he said, "If I did what was right under these circumstances, I wouldn't be back here."

DYLAN SMILES ON MISFORTUNE

RU: You've spoken in the past about how dark and negative the Grateful Dead were on the inside?



JPB Well, really there's a balancing between the Deadheads and the Dead. The lighter and more loving things became out front among the Deadheads, the darker and more twisted they became backstage. There was a great sacrifice involved in making that thing go on. After Brent died, the way they dealt with that was so callous and unfeeling. Towards the end, the range of emotional revelation that was allowed inside that family ran the entire gamut from spite to irony. You would never see a man cry. It was simply not done. Or admit to any kind of emotional sensitivity. I was riding from the funeral home to the grave site, and I said, "I'm the only person that can go back and forth between backstage and out front. I'm starting to think that I should pick one or the other. And if I have to do that, I'm going to stay out front. It's a lot safer there." And Garcia said, "Man, if I could do that I would. But, unfortunately, I'm strapped in here."

They're all enormously sensitive as individuals. But they allowed themselves to become part of a beast that was dark and cold and absolutely heartless. I mourn the Grateful Dead. I lament that I will never have one of those epiphanies that periodically occurred at a Grateful Dead concert. But things had gotten so bad that it was time.



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They had gotten used to living in very plush circumstances. They never stayed anyplace but a Four Seasons Hotel. There was a lot of ironically plush living. I can't cast any stones; I was as much a beneficiary as anyone else, and I was delighted by it. It's there, you take it. There was such a strong cultural impetus against judgment and moral imperatives, that it ended up creating a kind of moral vacuum. So there was no awareness of a point where irony crosses over into gross hypocrisy.

RU: How do you locate that line?

JPB: I think there's a lot of truth in that Dylan line "to live outside the law you must be honest." I'm one of the least judgmental people I know. You have to fuck up pretty magnificently before I'll be incapable of finding some extenuating circumstance to get you off the hook. But I do try to have my own personal morality. It's about how you treat people, basically. I don't require that other people share my values, but I do require that I have my own. And they're pretty straight in some ways.

RU: I heard a hysterical story about the Grateful Dead and Bob Dylan heading to Jerry's funeral. Do you want to tell that story?

B: Dylan is the strangest little creature. He's one of those characters that the holy prankster god decides to channel itself through. Further proof that God has a sense of humor. Because it never picks the worthy. It always picks the least likely candidate for the job. And Dylan is inspired, but he's a peculiar little guy. So we're all headed over to Bob Hunter's house after the funeral. I'm driving a rent-a-car, and getting directions from Weir, who was in kind of a strange state. He had been hit unbelievably hard. And he's not all that great at directions even in the best of circumstances. And Dylan is in a chauffeured limousine behind us. He's following our lead. And Weir's sending us up all these blind alleys and cul-de-sacs. There's a lot of turning around and going in the other direction and hand waving. Dylan is starting to radiate unhappiness. When Dylan is unhappy, you can feel it two blocks away. And I was thinking, I don't care how weird

this guy is, he's still the great Bob Dylan and he thinks I'm a complete fuck up. Because he's assuming that since I'm driving, I'm responsible for all this. So I'm pretty embarrassed. Anyway, we finally went up one of those extremely narrow Mill Valley streets and got into a really narrow spot where it was obvious we weren't headed the right way, but the only way we could turn around was to angle ourselves into this driveway. So I'm thinking everything is fine and I drive forward. What I don't know is there's a drop off—some stairs that lead down to somebody's house. And I drive right off this thing. And suddenly the front wheels are pawing air. Everybody in the back seat jumps out and suddenly the car goes boing! and all of it's wheels are off the ground. And it's poised there, teetering back and forth, and threatening to cascade down into these people's front door. We don't know what we're gonna do. We're blocking the street. Cars are coming down. We're all in the street in total distress. Dylan comes out of his limousine, and the look on his face was so disgusted.

So I said, "Look, if we all get together here and grab the front end and shove it back while somebody else puts it in reverse, it's possible that we could shove it back along the frame where the front wheels are lifted and pop it back out. So this is what we did and it worked like a charm. I mean, the whole thing didn't take but three minutes. We were in this complete Mongolian clusterfuck one minute and out of it the next.

Of course, Dylan wasn't about to be part of the team that popped the car out—there were six or seven guys, some of them passersby trying to get past us down the street, so it was an odd collection of folk. But the moment we were reaching out to make this great effort and push the car back out of danger, I turned around and there was Dylan about five feet behind us with the strangest smirk on his face. It was the only time I've seen the little asshole smile. So as soon as we got the car up and out, I looked to see what his reaction was. And he immediately spun on his heels and was headed back toward his limousine without giving us the grace of any appreciation. **ME**



Photos by Jill Posener


KATHY ACKER TRIBUTE

The depth of Kathy Acker's legacy is hidden from view. Like the treasure in her last great novel, *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, it might be too complex, amorphous, perverse, *alive*, to be clearly defined. The labels—"sexually transgressive postmodernist" "the original literary riot grrl"—can only hint at the rich texture of her body of works. At once bracingly intellectual and utterly elemental—Acker wrote from her cunt and from her dreams, crafting worlds full of signs and portents, deep resonances, sensory triggers, potent currents. What I'm saying here, and what the official lit people have not been able to tell you because it's outside the world of lit, is that Acker was a *magician*. She lived as a magician and she died, controversially, as a magician.

Critics and commentators emphasized her raw punk sexuality, her in-your-face radical impatience with bullshit, her feminist anger. And while all that was a vital aspect of her personality, its function in her work was to whip up the energy for the first cause—to use storytelling to perform magic. Acker's novels performed postmodern urban campfire grrl voodoo wherein characters (ex)changed skin, gender, temporal and physical location, and personal histories. Bits of appropriated text functioned as evocations and invocations for a ceremony that was wholly of her own making.

In all of this she is similar only to William S. Burroughs, who was also primarily involved with magick. They appear as twin avatars of the nomadic urban modern primitive tribes, making unsentimental-yet-poignant storybook lives out of the detritus of brutal, end-of-the-century hypercapitalism—Burroughs' wild boys and Acker's wild girls.

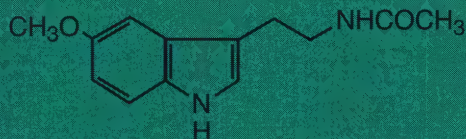
Acker died as she lived. Rejecting bureaucratic Western medicine, she consorted with magicians, healers, shamans, nutritionists, brujos, and psychics. This process didn't cure her cancer (as she deluded herself into believing) but it *did* make her better. Hers was not the path of designer dying—she spent a year in defiant denial. She took that rage and those fears to explore her core etiology—early woundings and the certain knowledge of her own freakishness. The fruit of that final ferocious encounter with herself is *Requiem*, the libretto for a three act opera.

Her legacy? The libretto of her life, a new kind of picaresque heroine—funny, feisty, fractious, and able to own her own hormones.  —R.U.Sirius



MELATONIN

t h e d a r k t r a v e l e r



MELATONIN; TRYPTAMINE, N-ACETYL-5-METHOXY; INDOLE, 3-(2-ACETAMIDO-ETHYL)-5-METHOXY; SEROTONIN, N-ACETYL-O-METHYL; ACETAMIDE, N-[2-(5-METHOXYINDOL-3-YL)ETHYL]; N-ACETYL-5-METHOXYTRYPTAMINE; 3-(2-ACETAMIDOETHYL)-5-METHOXYINDOLE; N-ACETYL-O-METHYLSEROTONIN; N-[2-(5-METHOXYINDOL-3-YL)-ETHYL] ACETAMIDE; REGULIN

MELATONIN ITSELF IS, BY ITS NATURE, A DARK TRAVELER IN A DARK FOREST,
AND WE STILL DO NOT KNOW HOW TO STUDY IT DIRECTLY

Sasha and Ann Shulgin know more about the intersection of chemicals, the brain, and human experience than anyone in history. Their self-published book *PIHKAL* (Phenethylamines I Have Known And Loved) has been passed from hand-to-hand and word-of-mouth until virtually every sophisticated mutant on the planet has one on her bookshelf.

Recently, they released a follow up book, *TIHKAL* (Tryptamines I Have Known And Loved). This invaluable tome—and tome it is at 804 pages—is destined to be a classic. In the words of Nicholas Saunders, “This book not only reveals how psychoactives can be synthesized, but also how they can be extracted from so many ordinary plants that the means for psychedelic exploration can never be controlled again. The genie is out of the bottle and all the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot put it back again.”

In this excerpt from *TIHKAL*, we’ve got the Shulgins applying their unique insights and expertise to the mega-hype supplement Melatonin. Who amongst us hasn’t heard of the wonders of this natural brain chemical; its impact on the presumably magical pineal gland, it’s unique ability to set and reset our inner time clocks so that we can take a lickin’ and keep on tickin’? Melatonin is just one of an astonishing range of tryptamines found in frogs, flowers, and fungi. As the good doctor says, “So many drugs, so little time!”

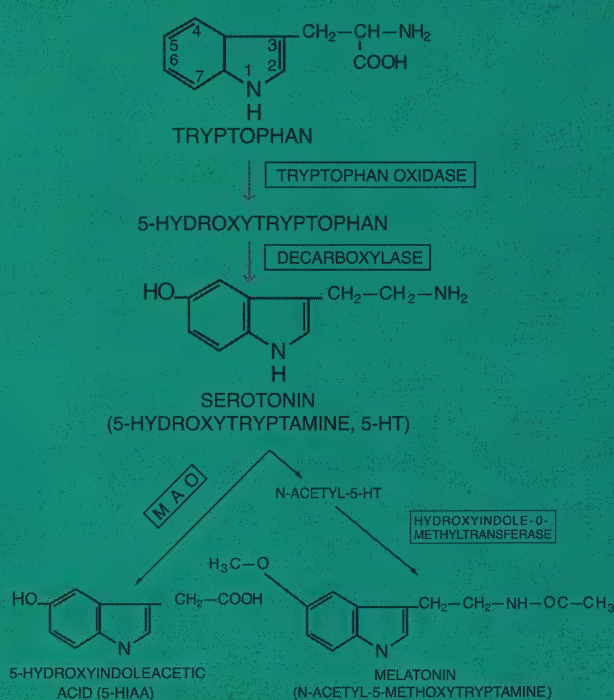
—R.U. Sirius

ILLUSTRATION | DAVID C. RANKIN



Melatonin's current popularity as the vogue sedative du jour is reflected in booming sales at health food stores. And yet what do we really know about this natural hormone? It has been touted as a sure-fire cure for jet lag. It's also reputed to enhance immune system response and address seasonal affective disorder. Finally, it's a powerful antioxidant and protects against radiation. And yet its precise mode of action is still shrouded in mystery. Genzyme, a major manufacturer of melatonin, estimates that 20 million people in the United States bought melatonin for the first time in 1995, and it places the retail sales at between \$200 million and \$350 million per year.

SYNTHESIS AND METABOLISM OF SEROTONIN



Even the dosage levels have been problematic. It's a difficult drug to try to determine the active level. It is late. You want to sleep. You take a tab of melatonin and you sleep well. Or you don't take a tab of melatonin and still you sleep well. Or perhaps you sleep badly—what connection can be drawn from the melatonin usage? I truly cannot say what the active level might be, because I do not know what positive experience might be expressed with an active level. In my notes is a report of a person who took 80 milligrams, orally. "Apparently I drifted quite quickly and smoothly into sleep, which was sound and which felt natural. On awakening, both my mood and performance seemed enhanced over my usual state." Is that a positive response? Melatonin has been espoused as a cure for jet-lag. But when I try to record the doses and times and effects, there is quite a bit of looseness. It is being sold in tablets (sometimes for sublingual use, why, I do not know) at dosage units from 300 micrograms to 10 milligrams. I know of one very modest i.v. trial (with 25 micrograms, at 0.10 micrograms / minute). "No subjective effects were noted."

Melatonin is found in many areas of many animals. It is involved in the skin coloration of amphibians, and in the thermal or motor regulation in some higher animals. Its major regulatory role is in response to light and, in man, is the major hormone produced by the pineal gland. This popular gland in the brain (incidentally the only unpaired site in the brain) has long been the darling of the new age set as it is the so-called third eye. Its primary hormone, melatonin, has been the subject of many studies related to brain function. It has effects on other brain bodies that are themselves involved in hormone secretion. It has been implicated in behavioral and emotional changes in man, including anxiety, seasonal depression, and delayed sleep-phase syndrome (DSPS, with a delay in getting to sleep, and delay in coming awake). Its function is strongly affected by exposure to light, and it has been referred to as the body's hormone of darkness. And there is no question but that the biochemistry of the brain allows it to know what time of day it is. Studies with the pineal in the rat have shown that the enzymatic activity needed to run the acetylation reaction (using N-acetyltransferase, which produces melatonin from its original serotonin precursor) is 45 times more active at 10:00 PM than it is at 10:00 AM.

There has been no satisfactory pharmacology ascribed to melatonin. At low dosages it certainly decreases sleep latency. It is not a sedative at the low milligram levels (which achieves blood levels in the physiological range) but rather is a factor that might guard the user from the disruptions known as jet-lag, which is certainly a close cousin to the DSPS. Here the dosages usually explored are in the 2 to 10 milligram range. It is invariably offered as a dietary supplement rather than a sleep aid (which would be a medical claim) but a side-effect that the user is warned against is drowsiness. One popular brand I know of is available in 2.5 milligram tablets recommended for sub-lingual use. I inquired of them to learn what studies were available that indicated any virtue the sublingual route might have over direct oral use, and I learned nothing. Just a few days ago I was shown a fascinating sham offering in the over the counter world. Alice brought home from the local branch of a national chain drug store a container containing 120 tablets that contained 300 micrograms each. The label said, "University Tested Strength" and

"Preferred Dosage." The recommendation was for the user to take from one to three tablets (still less than a milligram). This is an example of drug-abuse at the corporate level. At relatively large dosages (75-80 milligrams) it appears to produce an increase in total sleep, along with a decrease in daytime sleepiness. This is all without hangover. It appears to be a sleep catalyst at modest levels, and a soporific at higher levels, where it can be administered chronically (75 mg/day) for a couple of weeks with satisfactory effects. There is a paucity of reports at intermediate dosage levels.

In an entirely different area of pharmacology, one of the most effective protections against external radiation is a simple sulfur compound, mercaptoethylamine, commonly called MEA. This is a fascinating compound with the common name of cysteamine, and it has a wide variety of biological effects, both as a poison in that it causes ulcers, and as a treatment for poisoning in overdose cases involving acetaminophen (Tylenol). One of its most broadly studied properties is that of protecting an experimental animal against the damage of being exposed to radiation. It was unexpectedly observed that our essential and favorite neurotransmitter serotonin was every bit as effective as a radioprotective agent. In efforts to make this natural compound more accessible to the damaged animal, it was studied as the unacetylated O-methyl ether. This simple compound, 5-methoxytryptamine (5-MeO-T, or Mexamine) has been mentioned under the recipe for 5-MeO-DMT in its possible effects in potentiating CNS-active drugs. But here it deserves to be highlighted for its protection against radiation.

Two structural modification directions of 5-methoxytryptamine have been thoroughly explored. The Russians have published many years of work where they have modified that methyl group on the oxygen and have studied these changes in structure to changes in activity. In the United States, the research direction has exploited the observation that the acetamide derivative is also a good protective agent against radiation. And that amide is our title compound, melatonin. Extending the carbon length of the acetyl out to the amides in the hexanoic and octanoic area increases the prophylactic virtue, as does the making of an amide with a heptofluorobutyryl group. The bigger the amide, the better the protection. Another study has shown melatonin to be very protective of the DNA in human white blood cells from gamma irradiation, even at very low concentrations. This may be due to the strong anti-oxidant properties of melatonin. And then, there are claims that exposing animals to low, chronic levels of melatonin can affect their life span.

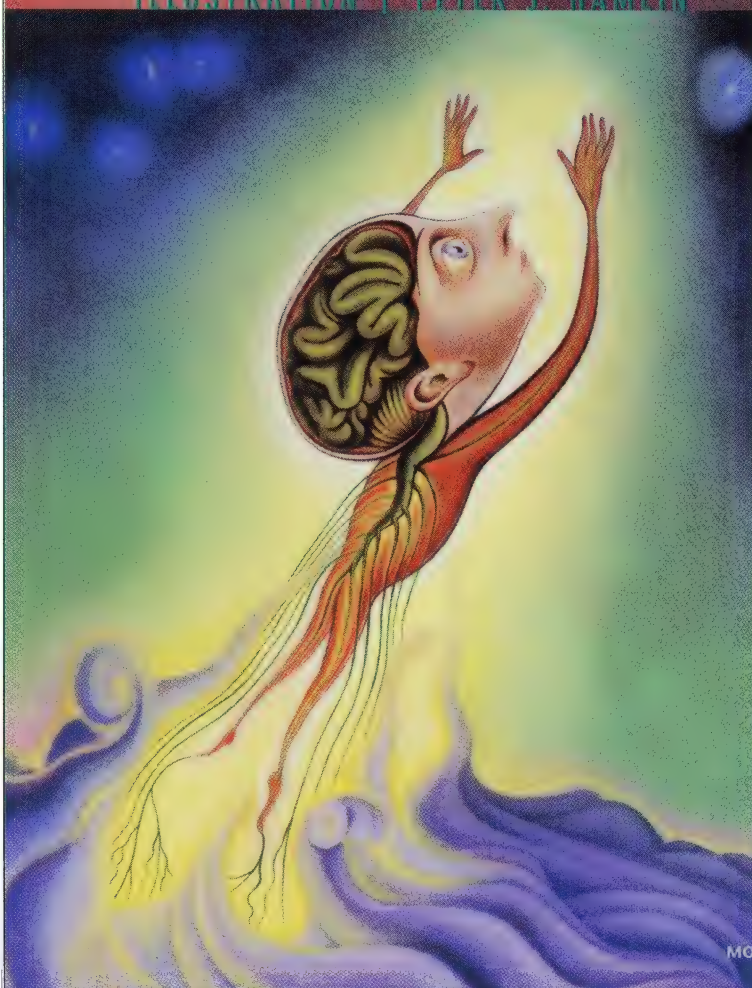
Could all of these actions of melatonin be connected? When one is flying at high elevations for long periods of time, one is exposed to quite a bit of solar radiation. Might there be a closer connection between the nuisance of jet-lag with the high altitude aspect of trans-Atlantic flights, rather than with the time zone passage of trans-Atlantic or trans-Pacific flights?

This is all pharmacology. These are answers to the question, "what does the drug do?" A second point must be loudly mentioned here, one that concerns the questions, "How does it do what it does, and where does it go to do it?" Allow me to tell a tale based on an old, made up, Sufi legend.

The master asked the student, "How do you follow a guide who cannot be seen, who walks through a dark forest in the middle of the night?"



ILLUSTRATION | PETER J. HAMLIN



The student answers, "It is simple. Let him carry a light."

"But then," answers the teacher, "He is no longer the guide who cannot be seen."

"True, but at least I can now follow him, and I know where he goes."

"You must be aware you are following a different guide?"

The student thinks for a minute, and then says, "Yes, of course I know that, but what else can I do?"

This is the sad plight of the research pharmacologist, who is trying to plot the in vivo course of a biochemical that cannot be followed. It must be labeled somehow, with a radioactive element, but nature demands that it is one that is not a normal part of its makeup. So he says, I would like to follow melatonin through the darkness of the body but I cannot see it as there is no light. I will attach a brilliant radioactive label to it, something like an iodine 125, so I can follow it as it goes here and there. The iodine is the light that the melatonin molecule is carrying, and the light can indeed be followed, but it is a different molecule. It is no longer melatonin, it is now 2-iodomelatonin. It is a completely different guide.

It is a sad story to tell, but this subtle shape-shifting is all too often invisible to the researcher. We will learn what melatonin does, by studying its radio-iodinated derivative. We will determine the quality of our synthetic analogs by measuring the displacement they make of iodinated melatonin from the melatonin receptor. Iodomelatonin is not melatonin. It is a different compound. It has a different biochemistry and a different pharmacology. It is used in melatonin studies only because it can be seen. Melatonin itself is, by its nature, a dark traveler in a dark forest, and we still do not know how to study it directly.

There is a third point, an additional fillip that is associated with the popular use of melatonin. The history of transition of any interesting drug up the historic ladder, from availability to promotion, to broadcast usage, to spectacular claims, to prohibition, to illegality. This has always been seen as a pattern controlling drug use in our society. But will this apply to melatonin? We are midstride in this process, today. Its reputation as a sedative and life-extender within the health food store circuit grew quickly in the early 90's. A sleep article in the magazine *Esquire* (Michael Segall, October, 1994) advanced the expected warning of not knowing enough about it. "Until more is known, though, it's probably not a good idea to self-medicate your jet lag with melatonin. No one knows how much you should take nor about the potential side effects." So far, right on schedule. Although a great deal is known, and potential side effects have been examined, the restrictive warning label must be voiced. But just recently, a feature article has appeared in another magazine (*Newsweek*, August 7, 1995, by Geoffrey Cowley) that expands on its potential additional virtues, such as preventing pregnancy, boosting the immune system, preventing cancer, and extending the life span. Heavy duty. It will be interesting to see if this precipitates an FDA control action in light of potential medical claims, or a DEA control action in light of an abuse potential. Maybe the sales of the chemical will have to hit something in the megatonage area first. I have just ordered a few grams from the Aldrich Chemical Company and I can state that its availability remains intact for the moment. But, if it is restricted, thus withdrawn and made illegal, its popularity will grow with renewed vigor, and it will be instructive to observe in just what way the dynamics of the illicit market will evolve!

This is a present day example of a problem in the making that law-makers and regulatory administrators have had to face again and again since that moment that the government decided that it was necessary to make a pretense of controlling the relationship between its citizens and their drugs. In the name of drug control, melatonin will eventually become illegal, and it will then pass totally out of any semblance of control. The fact that it is a natural component of the healthy human body will probably carry little weight in any attempt to thwart its becoming outlawed. Compounds such as bufotenine and DMT are normal components of our nervous system, but they are currently Schedule I drugs due to their reputed abuse potential and the absence of any accepted medical use.

A few words are needed here concerning the neurotransmitter serotonin. It is the immediate precursor to melatonin in the brain, and it is the, no, THE neurotransmitter that is the sine qua non of the brain. Everything centers on it, everything is explained by it, and all virtue and all damage that occurs there is because of it. It is not a brain chemical from outside the body. If you swallow a bunch of it, it passes on through the body without making it to the brain, because it is too polar to get through what is called the "blood-brain barrier." But maybe an enabled precursor just might make it. Recently there has been a wide promotion of 5-hydroxytryptophan that just might play this role. If it were to be actively transported into the brain, it might produce cerebral serotonin. But maybe not. I am just a bit overwhelmed by the beneficial steroids that are not steroid, and the smart drug that may or may not make you smart, of the hormone substitutes that might or might not make you a sexy octogenarian. The over-the-counter world is awash with materials that appear to be virtuous but which are carefully presented as being without any medical claims.

Back to serotonin. It is an essential factor in our brain chemistry. Since it cannot be made elsewhere and be moved to where it is needed, it must be made on location. Most drugs are judged good or bad by their influence on the changes made in serotonin levels. This is the guide we follow because he is carrying the light. What is really happening in the brain is happening in darkness, because we have no way of seeing it. It is my quiet hope that the psychedelic drugs will give us that guidance towards the understanding of the mind. They just might let us see that trail through the dark forest where most of the people who search choose to follow the lighted path. **ME**

Folk hero Sasha Shulgin is seriously credentialed. The outstanding authority on MDMA, he has 20 patents and has authored over 200 scientific papers on neurochemistry. His courageous explorations are a boon to all self-tinkerers.

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Tapping the Void

PHOTOS
BY
DAH



Research and devices seized
by the feds, fired and locked
out, physiology confiscated
and held without charges,
lost factories, years in jail.
The crime? Extracting energy
from the atmosphere *for free.*

Welcome to a world in which
psychic phenomena, paranormal
events and so-called mystical
teachings serve as clues to
a context beyond current
conception, in which matter
and energy interchange on
command, and precipitate
predictably out of nothing
at all. *by Mo Lohaus*

point energy

**During
the last two
decades Apollo
Astronaut and Ivy League
lecturer Brian O'Leary has
relinquished station and security
to map the vanguard of
Zero Point Energy**

M2: How did you become acquainted with the possibility of free energy, that a zero point device could function?

BO: My path has been new science... I earned a doctorate in Astronomy from Berkeley, was in the Apollo program, taught at a number of universities; on a quest for a science beyond a materialistic, reductionistic paradigm. I was interested in new physics, which led to consciousness research, which led to free energy research...

M2: How was new physics thinking received at the institutions you taught at?

BO: Not well received. When I was at Princeton a most common topic of discussion was how ridiculous links to the paranormal were. And yet at the same time I was on the faculty with some very prestigious people: John Archibald Wheeler, Henry Vigner, who later substantiated those very links.

My interest went beyond traditional physics, and there is traditionalism even within new physics.

New physicists do acknowledge that consciousness does play a role in the material world—the observer effect—but most of them stop there. They admit that there are paradoxes in quantum physics, and those paradoxes can only be resolved by the exercise of consciousness. But there's much more to that story. To the story of particles being influenced by observers...

M2: Much more to it...?

BO: For example the experiments of Bob Jahn at Princeton, Robert Jahn. His experiments with random event generators, influenced by observers in repeatable ways, which then gives a scientific basis for people influencing more than just particles. People can influence the result of anything, at any level.

M2: People were influencing the performance of hardware or software?

BO: I'm unaware of whether that distinction was considered. These were devices producing binary sequences, ones and zeros, at a very rapid rate. A test subject would come in and focus on a specific event. And the variations caused by human consciousness were statistically significant. There were also ways of amplifying these results: Bonded couples. Groups working together...

M2: And there was a great deal of resistance to this type of finding?

BO: Tremendous resistance. Bob Jahn was almost kicked out of Princeton for presenting his results. Almost like John Mack at Harvard, the psychiatry professor who came out with UFO abduction material. But this has happened throughout history: Galileo's colleagues refused to look through his telescope; the French Academy of Sciences in the seventeen hundreds refused to acknowledge meteorites existed, because rocks can't fall out of the sky; the journalist who covered the Wright Brothers flight, the original one, was fired from his position, because heavier than air machines can't fly. When we look at concepts like free energy and consciousness research...

M2: And the two are inextricably linked, in some way...

BO: Yes, oh yes. The new paradigm is ready to come through. As Bertrand Russell once said: the resistance to a new idea increases by the square of its importance. And if you talk about a two trillion dollar a year energy infrastructure worldwide that will be supplanted by a whole new technology, we are talking about tremendous resistance, tremendous change. There is no question that these things are really happening.

M2: A question which seems to arise around this revolves around Festinger's cognitive dissonance reduction. Here we have all these tenured faculty, who, if they're going to accept these new premises, would have to totally reevaluate the significance of their lives' work.

BO: Exactly. The materialist paradigm is the basis of it all and the fabric of that is being ripped apart by some of these new experiments in free energy and consciousness.

M2: And we're seeing folks beginning to fund this type of research?

BO: Beginning to fund, yes. Up until now, in this country, it has been very competitive, very suppressed, not acknowledged, but I think that's going to change very soon...

M2: The Japanese are funding...

BO: The Japanese are funding to the tune of, I believe, one hundred twenty million dollars a year. The Toyota Corporation is funding Pons and Fleischman, the cold fusion inventors, to the tune of ten million a year. In this country research and development have been so suppressed. There are so many stories of inventors like Mark Comings and others, who have been suppressed, whose devices have been confiscated by the Department of Defense, under the Secrecy Act. If the D.O.D. construes a device to have defense applications, they can confiscate the device and order the inventor never to work on it again.

M2: Weren't you in the Apollo program?

BO: Yes, I was an astronaut in the Apollo program in 1967 and was appointed to go to Mars, when that was still in NASA's program plan.

M2: Did NASA fall under the purview of the D.O.D.?

BO: NASA is a civilian agency. Its charter is for the open civilian exploration of space. They have since been swept up in the vortex of the D.O.D.

M2: Were you made privy to D.O.D. information as to the potentiality of zero point technology?

BO: I wasn't. But that was thirty years ago—I wasn't interested back then. I wasn't pursuing it.

M2: And now you're focused on more productive applications of technology?

BO: Increasingly, I'm getting out of conspiracy and into solutions. Certainly there is conspiracy and suppression, but I have energy now only for what we can do and how we can do it.

M2: Do you find much receptivity to the development of zero point technology?

BO: Sure. My book *Miracle in the Void* is all about my world travels, visiting free energy inventors, documenting the work and considering the changes we must make to embrace this new technology. These changes are profound. We're talking about nothing less than supplanting a two trillion dollar a year infrastructure.

M2: Fossil fuels.

BO: Yes. Fossil fuel delivery. It's such a big shift for a culture, it's no wonder we've been resistant. But the Wright brothers have already flown on this one. The concept is alive and well, totally viable. All we need to do is figure out how to implement it.

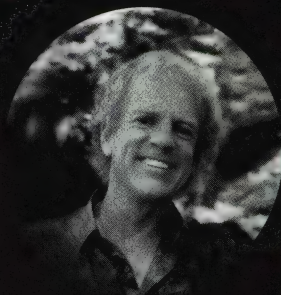
M2: You've seen functional devices actually running?

BO: Yes.

M2: Tiwari?

BO: Tiwari; Inamata. Tiwari is the chief project engineer on the largest nuclear power plant in India, under construction. He's getting ready to retire, so he can work on his zero point research full time, and the government of India has given him laboratory space

Brian O'Leary



and funding to do so. Inamata is Japanese—another example of a country that's getting into it. Our country is too, yet under the ground rules of competitive private enterprise, so it's gone underground here and there have been so many absurd blockages. We're in "proof of concept" mode right now. I think the elegant solution is solid state, and there are a number of devices coming along in that arena: magnetic devices, charge cluster devices, plasma devices.

M2: The plasma device was patented, the Canadian device...

BO: Yes, the Correa device.

M2: And the Patterson Power Cell...

BO: Yes; that's an American device, patented under circumstances the patent office wasn't aware of...

M2: Patterson writes in saying he's an old man and he's dying and won't you please patent my life's work.

BO: Exactly.

M2: So the patent office fast-tracks his application and it slips past the usual censors.

BO: [smiling]

M2: And both these devices are over unity?

BO: Yes, they are. The Patterson Power Cell is twenty times unity, and the Correa plasma discharge device is up there.

M2: Twenty out for one in?

BO: Yes.

M2: Describe zero point energy.

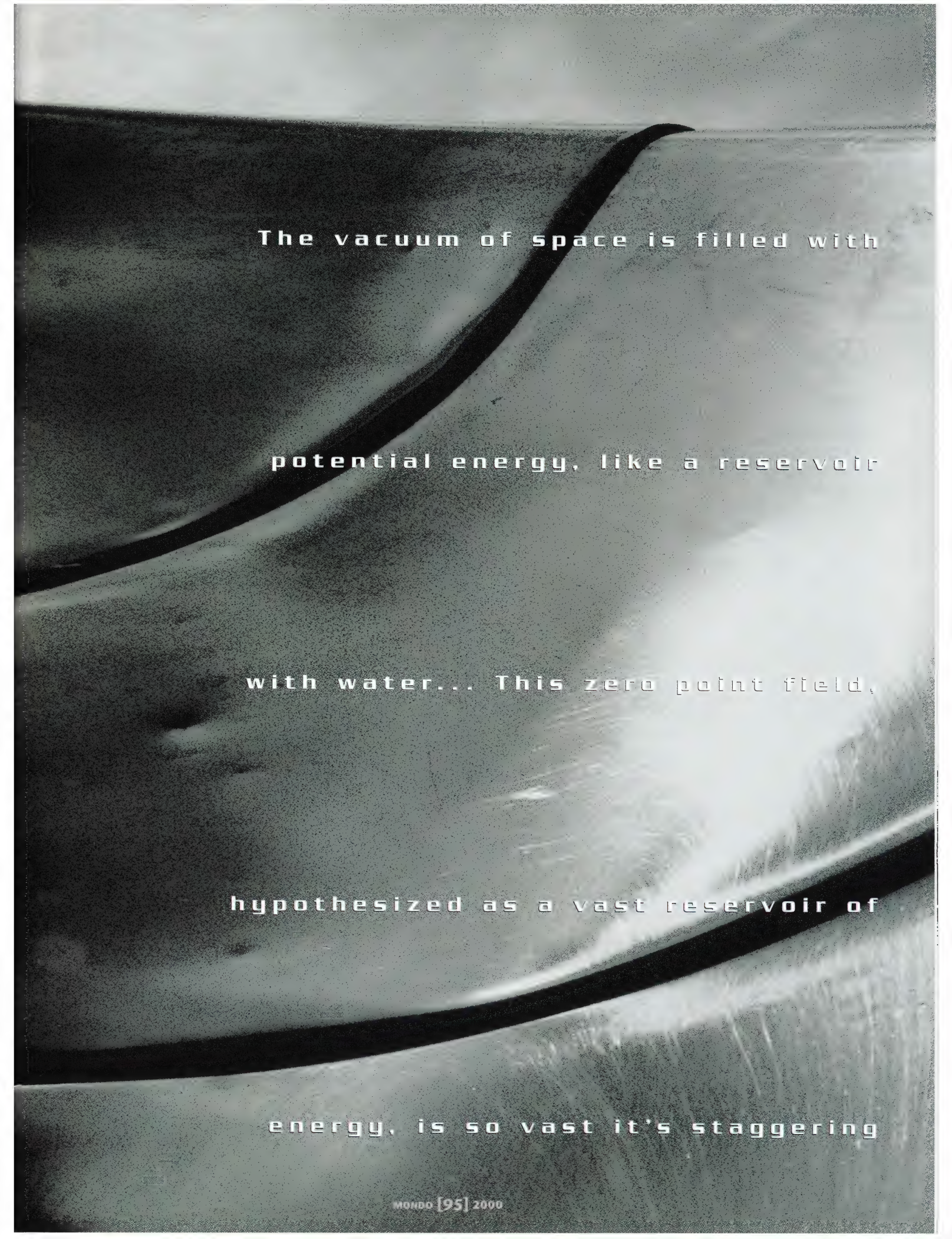
BO: The vacuum of space is filled with potential energy, like a reservoir with water. We just have to know how to tap it. A way to tap it, according to theoretical physicists working on this, is to accelerate a charge, an electromagnetic charge, within that field, through the rotary motion of magnets, such as N-machines, a Tuwari type device, or a solid state device in which the electromagnetic charges are oscillating. This zero point field, hypothesized as a vast reservoir of energy, is so vast it's staggering.

M2: The bases for this hypothesis?

BO: Physicists have come up with a number of reasons why this field must exist. John Archibald Wheeler has said that one cubic centimeter of free space contains enough energy to evaporate all the oceans of the Earth, something like ten to the hundred and fifteenth ergs. We haven't been aware of this field because it is homogeneous and isotropic, i.e: the displacement is the same everywhere and in all directions, so we can't detect it using traditional means of measurement. But if we accelerate a charge in the presence of the field, then we begin to have an interaction.

M2: Sounds like this field supports the geometry of the universe; inertia. Mark Comings describes it as energy of every conceivable wavelength with perfectly symmetrical dynamically opposing vectors. He maintains that all matter results from an asymmetry in this dynamic opposition; that matter precipitates out as a collapse of wave function, that the correction of this asymmetry, and resumed harmony with the field, describe entropy. Since matter and energy are two phases of the same phenomenon, either or both could be precipitated out, if we elicit the collapse of dynamic equilibrium. You mention accelerating a charge and initiating an interaction; precipitating out energy. Do we start to get anomalies?

BO: Yes.



The vacuum of space is filled with
potential energy, like a reservoir
with water... This zero point field,
hypothesized as a vast reservoir of
energy, is so vast it's staggering

M2: Like with the plasma device.

BO: That would be an example of accelerating a charge and an interaction with the zero point field.

M2: Which precipitates the delivery of more energy than was expended accelerating the charge.

BO: Yes. In some cases we get energy out of the field; in some cases we put energy into the field. For example Sparky Sweet's device, a man who develops some solid state free energy devices—the device was actually cold after it ran blatant violations of the laws of thermodynamics—but we realize that the "laws of thermodynamics" are a limiting case of "reality". They only apply under equilibrium conditions and we are not operating under equilibrium conditions. This is where chaos theory comes in...

M2: Some of the applications would be infinite energy generation with a very small delivery device anywhere in the world...

BO: Replacement of circuit breakers, power lines, internal combustion engines; decentralized local power. Little power packs, little solid state devices delivering the energy we need.

M2: How small?

BO: It could be very small; basically a crystal, or magnetic device, or plasma discharge device, totally self-contained...

M2: As small as this tape recorder? [1" by 2.5" by 5"]

BO: Yes. Definitely.

M2: The Correa Device, the Pulsed Abnormal Glow Discharge device, the plasma discharge device that will power a car, is what—six by six by twelve inches?

BO: That's right.

M2: And other devices, say, for deactivating radioactive waste?

BO: That's a cousin technology to free energy technology. There are a number of people working on that; Yull Brown and others. There's alchemy going on there. At Texas A&M, John Bockris has been able to transmute elements using a similar type of technology.

M2: He can change the atomic weight of elements?

BO: Yes. It's not that big a leap. He can turn hydrogen into deuterium and into tritium and into helium. With heavier

elements he can take them a few steps down. This is a byproduct of free energy research—the ability to transmute elements. It is thus in principle possible to deactivate radioactive waste.

M2: Does it require vast amounts of energy to do so?

BO: Not really. In cold fusion, and this is probably an appropriate name for this, it's room temperature generation of energy and transmutation of elements—like a hydrogen bomb that's under control. Elements come together to form heavier elements with a net release of energy.

M2: They're more stable after this?

BO: It depends on what you're fusing. John Bockris has been able to produce gold in small amounts.

M2: A phrase which keeps coming up: technology recapitulates ontogeny. We are building devices which illustrate for us what our bodies are capable of doing. The theory of biological transmutation, based on Kervran's work in France, is being proved—that we do this with elements which pass through our bodies. Zero point technology seems to point out how we can tap into the universal *chi*.

BO: Yes. There is the zero point field, the universal *chi*, no question about it. And we can tap into it with our bodies. In a way we are our own free energy devices, and in the long run we won't need external devices to do that; we'll be able to do it ourselves.

M2: Has anyone hooked up with yogis?

BO: To a degree that's been done. But the most grounded research is Robert Jahn's, using devices which measure human interaction with machines. Those experiments are kissing cousins with free energy research because they show beyond any reasonable doubt that humans can influence the flow of electrons.

M2: Telepathically...

BO: Yes, using consciousness.

M2: What subfields of this interest you most?

BO: Consciousness research seems more important than free energy research. Consciousness research measures human interaction with the material world and how human consciousness

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can influence the material world. And so there are a number of experiments which repeatedly show that this indeed can happen and that the effects can be amplified by various group processes—in couples...

M2: Couples? The implications for *folie communiquée*.

BO: Bonded couples' influence on random event generators is seven times greater than those people acting as individuals, in repeatable ways. Bringing groups together for a specific purpose, in Satsang, in humor, the effects are even greater. There are studies going on now, at Princeton and UNLV, that show beyond any reasonable doubt that this is true.

I foresee that these experiments will lead to a point at which we go over the threshold of objective materialism, where groups will be able to create their own realities in the material universe. The first step of this is to manipulate the flow of electrons, of energy, but eventually it will be much more.

M2: What do you envision?

BO: Any type of material reality can be created by human consciousness. That's a very powerful potential, and it can also be abused; maybe that's why it's been withheld from us—because the Edward Tellers of the world will want to create Doomsday machines—that's the down side of all of this.

M2: It sounds like one of the down sides. The unchecked, infinite ability to harvest what is left of Earth's aggregated biomass seems a pretty horrifying possibility.

BO: Yes. Yes, you're right.

M2: How to direct this "free energy" exclusively to folks engaged in sustainable or bioaggregative ventures?

BO: We need leadership, ethics, social dimensions to keep these things in check. Groups are emerging: The Institute for New Physics, The International Association for New Science, The Institute for Noetic Sciences. All of these groups are introducing new sets of ethics, absolutely required for the limitation of these new technologies.

But the way things are coming together currently, the unified intentions of the actual people doing the work... I sense a higher force behind it. I am not worried. **M2**

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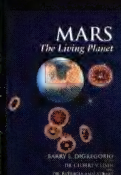
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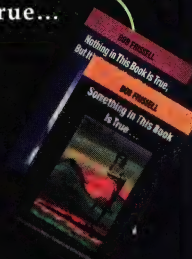
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LASER WEAPONRY

blackbudget toy

Charles Ostman: Good morning!
I'm glad to be back on the show.

GM: You spent about eight years
in the National Lab System and
part of that time you were
involved in the SDI Program—
Star Wars.

CO: That is true, and I will have
to tell you up front that there are
some aspects or components of
some of the projects that are
probably still classified today, so
there will be a few blanks in the
description.

GM: I understand that. There's a
brief story I mentioned some
time ago about laser weapons. I
think it came about in the wake
of the Chinese announcing that
they came up with this ground
based laser that can blind troops.
If they got that, we gotta be
doing something.

CO: They most certainly did,
and, in fact, we're involved in
very similar programs along with
Britain, France, and a few other
folks. In fact, that whole plethora
of activity is sort of a sub-category
by itself. But maybe the thing to
do is to start by describing the
infrastructure that really brought
this whole scenario to practice. I
will tell you that I was involved in
a project called Antares...

**Geoff Metcalf: We have a special guest
this hour: Charles Ostman is back to
talk about new developing laser weaponry
—things that you see in science fiction
movies that are becoming reality.**

**Charles Ostman is a senior fellow with
the Institute for Global Futures, with
the Foresight Institute, and science
editor for MONDO 2000, and a whole
bunch of other things. I want to
welcome him back to the program.**

Hi Charles!

Geoff Metcalf interviews Charles Ostman on the Radio

GM: That's been declassified.

CO: Exactly. At that time it was the largest laser, at least in the western world. The Soviets had similar projects going on. Even to this day those projects might be buried under a big cloak of secrecy, so I really can't give a comparison.

GM: Okay, without getting too complicated in talking about femtosecond high energy pulses and that kind of stuff, how big would this thing be?

CO: The business of making large lasers hinges on several things; it's not just can we make a big laser. Yes, we can. They can be contrived out of a variety of different types of materials—usually it's a plasma-based system. But in order to really optimize the performance of such a device, you have to have a power supply that can fuel this thing. The power supply has a maximum energy output potential. It's measured in joules really, which consists of a lot of different factors—the firing rate, the length of the pulses, how many pulses, etc. all play into how you're going to use the laser, for what purpose.

GM: I gotta ask you, since you touched on techno stuff—what is a femtosecond?

CO: Well it's just a measure of time. You have microseconds; you have nanoseconds; you have picoseconds; and you have femtoseconds. I believe it's ten to the minus twenty one if I'm not mistaken.

GM: Never mind. I just overloaded. Forget I asked that question.

CO: The reason you go for very short pulses is because, by the rules of physics, if you have a known amount of energy, if you can compress time then you get a larger amount of wattage, so the trick you want to play, if you want to neutralize something, you want to burn a hole through a missile warhead, or neutralize an aircraft, or especially vaporize something, a short pulse is a very high energy signature. It's really the best way to approach that problem. And, of course, you want to tune the frequency of the laser, so that it matches the absorption spectrum on the target material so it warms up in a hurry.

GM: Naturally; of course.

CO: Anyway, back to square one. What enters into this whole picture is tremendous advances in materials science. Let me explain why I'm so intent on this. The original Antares Project was buried in the ground and I do mean in the ground. It went several floors into the ground. I won't specify how many or how large; let's say it was the size of a large office building. That was the laser, and the power supply was several times larger than that. The objective was to have a geosynchronous satellite directly overhead. That satellite would have a steerable mirror which could be aimed around in different directions, to be aimed at other secondary or tertiary satellites, with reflector mirrors, that would reside in relocatable orbital paths.

their various trajectories, the secondary satellite could steer their mirrors toward them and essentially neutralize them. In other words, a burst of pulses bouncing off the first satellite, aimed toward the collection of secondary satellites, would steer their mirrors to shoot these pulses of light at the incoming warheads.

GM: Let's see if you can answer this without violating any secrecy or anything. Are we capable today of defending against a missile attack tomorrow?



artwork by Brutal Gift & Co.

The point being that if there were an all out exchange or even a limited exchange, and you have MIRVs—Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles—when the MIRV opens up and you have 10, 12, 16 or so warheads drifting on

CO: If there were certain weaponry systems actually deployed, and I do mean *if*, at least a limited exchange could possibly be neutralized. But that's a big if because it's really a matter of policy and funding, not that the funding's actually there.

GM: This Antares Project that you worked on—is it funded? Are they still working on it?

CO: I think it's still wimping along, but probably for more benign purposes I would guess. It's probably going to be for fusion research more than anything else. But let's get into the business of flyable systems. I think this is where it gets more interesting. The whole concept of having an entire array of flyable, even orbital systems was the real goal of SDI. In order to get this possible, you really have to optimize the power supply. The lasers could be shrunk down and still have a pretty good punch coming out the business end. It was fueling the laser that really became the problem. As far back as the early 90's there were modified 747s. They were packed with enough capacitive power supply components to get off a couple of packets of pulses, but then they would have to fly around for a few hours and recharge the system. Things have changed dramatically, and I have a lot of evidence. The idea that super-conductive materials can be applied to make a power supply fast and more efficient, and therefore able to deliver the kind of wattage they need to drive these things on a much more frequent usage basis—that's where the real goal is. So it's not so much, can we pack a big laser into an airplane? It's more, how effectively can materials science be applied towards the design goal?

GM: In Livermore they were working on two systems. One was Shiva and the other was Nova.

CO: They were two gigantic, industrial strength size

ground based lasers. They were for more benign purposes. They were assimilating fusion reactions for energy purposes and also to simulate the hydrogen bomb.

from a
satellite
you can
pick out
the
decomposition
pattern of a
particular
living being...
and
zap him

GM: Do they have a weapons capability?

CO: They could, but not in their current configuration. They serve as a remarkably useful test platform by which those kinds of power outputs can be experimented with. But in terms of actually putting them into the air using them as a ground based system for weapons purposes, these would actually be prototypes.

GM: We're talking about laser weaponry. Some stuff that actually exists and some that

might be in Gene Roddenberry's mind somewhere floating up in space...

CO: This is one of those worlds where fact and fiction actually blend together, and my effort has been to provide as much hard fact as possible, because the public's perception is to go out and see Hollywood's rendering of *Independence Day*, and they have these bizarre notions that this is all just make believe.

GM: My producer wants to know how long until he can get a car-mounted laser.

CO: We're not that far off. In fact, I was about to explain in some detail what really is going on, and what I would call the portable laser pack system.

GM: Are these lasers like the phasers we see on Star Trek?

CO: I don't know what phasers are; I can only tell you about lasers because I'm familiar with how they're built.

GM: You talk about more efficient laser systems such as chemical lasers. That sounds like you're mixing apples and kumquats.

CO: No, no! I can give you an example. There's a system called the alpha system which is a hydrogen fluoride laser. In fact, this was being developed by the Pentagon's ballistic missile defense organization—TRW—the technology group down in Redondo Beach. This was going to be a \$30 million project in 1995, and it's whole purpose was to be a semi-portable incoming warhead neutralization device.

GM: It'll be a \$6 billion project next year.

CO: Whatever. All these things are black budget, and whatever pinprick of a budgetary suggestion is offered to the public, just magnify that to a factor of ten and that's what it will cost. But the point is, there was a specific limited research into things like can we neutralize an incoming cruise missile or an equivalent, a Scud or whatever. That's from the ground up, or can we have something in the air that can do a shoot down? In both cases you're dealing with the physics of the atmosphere, thermodynamics, water vapor in the air, and a whole bunch of annoyances that make these things less efficient at certain distances.

GM: How are they mixing chemical and lasers together?

CO: If you have a plasma-based laser... I don't want to get into a long physics lecture...

GM: Thank you.

CO: But you have what's called carrier material, and then you have the actual material which lases. And you excite the atoms of the lasing material to resonate at certain frequencies, and the photons are bounced back and forth inside of a cavity. The cavity is designed at very precise measurements, so you have a complete reflector at one side and a partial reflector transmitting at the other side, and this is what causes the photons to become cohesive.

GM: You mentioned Boeing and Raytheon...

CO: Those are only some of the players. We have General Dynamics and lots of folks, all of whom are subcontractors developing different components for different kinds of systems.

Another example I can offer is the U.S. Airforce airborne laser system actually is a TRW project. It's called the BDL2. And this is a full power, fully functional, flyable unit. It's something that could fit in your garage. Of course, the firing rate and actual output energy levels are highly classified.

GM: I was doing some web searching and I found the weapons report. And they talk about kinetic energy weapons.

CO: That's a different kind of creature. And with beam weapons it's both photons and particulate matter. The particulate matter weapons actually were more interesting from my perspective, because you had a relatively low power requirement to fuel these things. Especially the so-called neutron beam. With a neutron beam you are actually propelling neutrons surrounded by a sheath of protons that keep them clumped together. The problem with particles is they tend to dissipate over long distance. Whereas columnated light has a fairly high cohesiveness factor to it. So even after a while it's got enough punch to be useful for something.

GM: Are they trying to commingle conventional systems with this new high-tech stuff? I know they have something called a stinger with an optimized radar distribution thing...

CO: Of course. What you really want to do is be able to integrate this stuff as seamlessly as possible.

GM: Let's talk about smart weapons systems...

CO: This is what I was alluding to earlier. We have a package and the package consists of smart sensor systems, artificial intelligence, a highly integrated surveillance grid, both satellite and high altitude aircraft recon data. This whole thing fits together like a large puzzle. So that if a person on the ground or a field commander needs to target an enemy, Entity X, they can communicate with their satellite. The satellite can scan a three dimensional LIDAR representation of that object for however many miles away it is, and integrate whatever beam weapons resources that might be available at that time to neutralize it.

GM: Now, you claim it's not too far in the future—the integration between implantable bio-devices, and external smart weaponry.

CO: Well, theoretically, the technology that could put this into place is there now. Whether or not the policy has been determined to actually fund that kind of a project, I honestly don't know.

GM: What would that consist of? What would implant into a soldier to integrate with the weapons system?

CO: Let's back up a couple of squares. The ingredient list as in a recipe...

GM: I just saw that movie, *Foxfire*, with Clint Eastwood, where he thought something and the weapons system did it.

CO: That was a great movie, but it didn't involve bio, but it did involve a direct mind/machine interface link, which is something that has been going on for a number of years.



GM: Come awnnn!

CO: Hold on! Calm down! There's something called a SQUID detector, which has been around for many years...

GM: Yeah, I used to use it when I went fishing...

CO: No, not exactly. It's a Superconductor Quantum Interference Device—and I can explain what that means.

GM: It wouldn't make any difference if you did.

CO: Okay. But the whole point is that by using these superconductor probes, one can detect extremely minute electrical fluctuations within the brain, and it'll cause disturbances in the magnetic field and that can be translated directly into interpreting a specific kind of thought pattern. Now, I'm not saying we can see inside your head. But there have been studies here and in the Soviet Union which were very highly documented. In fact I have some of the U.S. government's papers on this exact topic. In fact, right at Patterson Air Force base as far

back as 1987/88. The SQUID detectors of those days were these huge 55 gallon drum-sized contraptions filled with liquid helium for cryogenics purposes, into which were submerged these superconductive magnetic systems, and then the pilot, who wasn't flying anything, was strapped onto a gurney... the poor guy trapped in this thing; it looked hideous, with this huge contraption over him. But the whole point is, over time, a test person could be trained to think yes, no, or a color...

GM: And the weapon would respond to the brainwaves...

CO: Exactly. In other words, you could detect a specific brainwave pattern set that could be correlated to a control signal, and the whole point is, can I think to my machine?

GM: And try not to daydream or have erotic dreams.

CO: [chuckles] Yeah. Actually, there's a joke like this: amongst these biokinetic interfaces, and biomorphic processing systems, one of the other attempts along these lines was not a mind machine interface, but involved using an infra red beam that reflected directly off the surface of the eye. As the eye moves about a little bit, the curvature of the lens of the eye provides a nice little reflective surface so you can detect where the eye's looking. The only

problem was they were in fact doing some trials at China Lake weapons test center, and the guy who shot off the missile blinked or sneezed or something, and the missile shot way off into the blue, not anywhere near where it was supposed to go...

GM: Oh yeah, that's hysterical, Charles. [dripping with sarcasm]





CO: So they scrapped that for the time being. But in terms of can we connect mind/machine interface to a weapons control system—once again we get back to not how big a device we have, but how smart.

GM: *[after the break]* I'm Geoff Metcalf and we're speaking with Charles Ostman. He's kind of a grand poobah techno-geek that we have with us

CO: What a wonderful title!

GM: Add that to your list. I want you to translate something for me, okay? I'm looking at this weapons directory web page, and it says "Tactical high energy laser: High energy lasers will provide a bold new active defense capability for soldiers in the 21st century. THEL offers a cost-efficient response to late acquisition or high speed maneuvering thrusts as well as salvo attacks. Laser fire units have the advantage of deep magazines, speed of light fly up time, and fast retargeting. Laser energy does not fly toward the target, but is on target with almost no delay. Kill time is short, and there is a continuing revision of the momentary kill opportunity." What does all that mean?

CO: What that means is that with traditional trajectories you have time of flight, you have trajectory influence caused by wind and other factors, and it's relatively imprecise.

GM: I thought you said the recharging time was long.

CO: This is where the smart materials come in. I saw a photograph of the Chinese package. In fact, as far back as 1995 there was an attempt by the U.N. to initiate a treaty to ban the blinding lasers—at least on the battlefield. And I think 12 or 13 nations signed on. Of course none of the nations were actual participants in the development of the...

GM: And China didn't sign on and they have it...

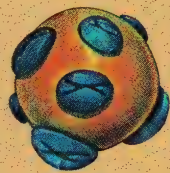
CO: Even if China did, it wouldn't mean anything anyway. But the UK, France and the U.S. didn't sign on either. That kind of indicates where we were coming from. But the photograph was kind of a two man carryable package. You have the actual laser itself, which was mounted on a tripod roughly the size of an M60 machine gun. Then you had the power supply pack which was maybe the size of a large suitcase or a steamer trunk. And the two guys would literally carry it out on the battlefield and there was a cable that went from the power pack into the laser. In terms of superconductive, high efficiency, high storage capacity power supply systems, this is where the physics and the chemistry and, to a certain degree, the nanotechnology all came into play. The ability to contrive new materials that have all these properties—the whole plethora of material science or engineered materials has drastically changed beyond belief in the last two to three years. And Mitre, which is a huge company, like E-Systems what is to computing, in terms of black budget. They have a surprisingly large budget specifically aimed at nanotech-related applications. And

a big chunk of that budget is devoted to engineer materials. There's a big race on around the world. In Japan and Europe and here, it's about who can crack the nut of warm temperature superconductors for commercial purposes. If this were really possible and it were out there in the general world, you'd see electric vehicles and solar panels and all sorts of things that would really change the way that nature is dispensed for the average citizen. However, it will not filter into commercial use for quite a long time. Why? It's because of applications just like this: high energy, high density power packs and things of this ilk. If I were to draw a chart or some kind of a timeline where you had time going horizontally, and what I call the technology porosity barrier going vertically, we'd divide it into three sections, each a ten or twelve year increment pattern. We'd have the commercial world, where you and I could go to our local computer store, appliance store, and buy the latest techy gadgetry depending on what our personal interests are. Then we'd go beyond that barrier into the military world, what I call the common military world, and there you have technologies which will not filter into the public domain for another 10 to 12 years. Then you have the third barrier, which I call the black barrier, which are technologies that are still under development and very carefully guarded in terms of secrecy. Only a very few in primary mission critical occupations within the military even know they exist, never mind deploying them.

GM: I remember in the 70's, I attended something when I was in the Army that was supposed to be a classified briefing on laser designators. I spent so much time adjusting firing with the artillery, I thought this was the slickest thing since sliced bread. You point this toy at something; it puts a signature on it; the bomb goes up and goes *[sniff, sniff]* and hits it.

CO: Things have gone way beyond that point. Illuminating a target so that you have a smart device on that frequency of light is child's play. But where it gets more interesting is LIDAR, which is optical wavelength radar, which can provide extremely precise topographical feature representation many miles out, even from satellite. So if I want to see something the size of a golfball on the ground somewhere, I don't even need to illuminate it, I just need to know what the topographical features are. Then I can fix the coordinates and deliver what I want to deliver to that spot.

Pete: *[Caller from Lafayette]* After that brief explanation of the '88/'89 test at Patterson, maybe we have an explanation for the '90 budget deal. *[heartly laughter]*. The question I called to ask—I'm still not convinced that your guest answered your question fully and satisfactorily, Geoff. Let's take a scenario: Yeltsin dies; within two weeks Zhirinovskiy has thrown a coup and is threatening to make good on his boast that he will return Alaska to Russian hands. Negotiations fail; Yeltsin makes a pass at Allbright; she slaps him; he slaps her; and the missiles





take flight. Are we going to be able to knock those missiles two weeks from today out of the sky or not in any meaningful percentage?

CO: Okay, I'll try to answer this to the best of my ability. And I completely understand—the scenario is a very likely one, by the way. I was watching the scenario there with a great deal of trepidation. He is exactly the kind of lunatic that if he did take charge he would probably instigate something. You're right. So given all that—would it be an all out exchange or limited? That's one question. Number two: I don't think an all-out exchange would be seen as a very profitable option...

GM: Charles, the bottom line question is, if they lobbed one nuke at us, could we knock it down?

CO: I think under limited situations we probably have the ability to knock down a few. However, this would be a very limited capacity. I think the reason it's not demonstrated now is because it's an ace up

our sleeve. We're not going to show something like this because it would reveal our hand.

GM: Billy in San Jose, you're on KSFO with Charles Ostman.

Billy: I'm an armaments expert, and Charles, I want to thank you for speaking today. I have some friends who worked on the Black Project. They would refract a laser from down earth where they would join through the atmosphere—he was a particle physicist—where you could join a bunch of lasers that were circled to join together up in the atmosphere, I know you know what I mean...

CO: Sure.

GM: I'm glad somebody does.

B: I met a guy who actually cracked the code superconductor issue and was actually negotiating with the government. The government wanted to take it from him and he didn't want to. I think it was an interesting thing, and I might someday write a book on it.

CO: I think that's an extremely interesting topic, and I can completely visualize the scenario. Congratulations to your friend, and I hope he's in a safe place.

B: The amazing thing about the superconductor issue is that the issue of power distribution... he predicted that his theory would save 2 to 3 billion dollars. Because with superconductive materials you have much more efficient distribution by several orders of magnitude.

CO: Absolutely.

B: What we're talking about here is an entirely different kind of warfare than what Major General Beaucamp talked about in terms of the digital battlefield, or even hover weapons, which I was involved in when I was in the military working at the Pentagon. What this guy told me blew my mind. In essence what we're talking about here is the elimination of jungle warfare and urban warfare. What we're saying here—and I'm going to be careful—the ability to analyze things from

satellite. You can also use neutrino trace analysis; you know what I'm talking about, Charles?

CO: I've heard the term, but I don't know if it's applied to strategic deployment purposes, but there's a methodology where you can analyze the consistency of something using neutrino delay factor...

GM: You guys, don't get too techno on me, okay?

B: What I'm saying is that from a satellite you can pick out a tank, or you can pick out the decomposition of a particular living being, and you can actually point out the neutrino traces of the particle decay that are applicable to a particular individual...

GM: Like a fingerprint... You can actually identify an individual?

B: Exactly. In other words, from space, he could find, say, Saddam Hussein, see his chemical decomposition signature, and zap him. And by that, we have eliminated warfare as we know it, and that's why a lot of these are going for this idea, because in essence what they found is this—If you can destroy any leader or any tank from space...

GM: Or any talk show host...

B: What we're talking about is real analysis and destruction from space.

CO: Let me make a comment here. As far as neutrino decay analysis being used on a per individual basis, that I haven't seen evidence of, although it may be possible. But in terms of other technologies which can provide surprisingly accurate

topographical, infrared, and other components to say, I think I know what this object is and therefore I can target it. The reality of integrating a surveillance grid, a very highly intelligent processing system, you might say a processing resource base—let me toss out an example of this: Remember a few years ago there was this debacle about the so-called NRO, the National Reconnaissance Office, this giant building that suddenly appeared out of nowhere?

GM: And 350 million bucks they spent for it and nobody was there...

CO: Exactly. And the building is still there. They might have relocated some of its contents. But this was just a little pin prick of the size and nature of what's going on out there. In terms of trying to integrate massively computing parallel processing resources...

GM: They finally acknowledged that it was going to be the NSA's home.

CO: The NSA and some other participants as well. And you might find this kind of interesting. There's a big push on to privatize surveillance data. Other countries are diving into what they see as open market share...i.e. if we don't have access here, we simply go to Brazil or someplace. If we have certain limitations as to what's available domestically, we can simply go shopping. And if I'm a private institution, and I want to purchase this and sell it to a secondary contractor... In other words, this whole arena is about to be thrown into a free-for-all scenario so even if you're not looking at neutrino decay signatures, there may be some other mechanism by which you could, simply for hire, target the entity of choice ...

GM: Charles, more propaganda from the weapons directory: They say the effectiveness of high energy lasers as a tactical weapon has been successfully demonstrated.

CO: Without question.

GM: In this joint U.S./Israeli Program. It was in February of '96.

CO: Well, there are some aspects of this that I perhaps shouldn't allude to.

GM: Well, what they say in their web site is "For the first time ever there was

destruction of a short range rocket in flight by a laser at the high energy laser systems test facility White Sands Missile Range."

CO: That's exactly correct. In fact, I can tell you some specific details of this. It's purpose was to prove that such a thing was actually possible, and that this could be packaged as either a naval device or an airforce device. In fact, the acronym for MIRACLE stands for the Mid InfraRed Advanced Chemical Laser which was part of the unique program that was actually several different projects, all in the one megawatt or larger capacity laser. And this was back in '93/'94. More recently, the National Laboratory for High Energy Physics, in Japan of all places, actually demonstrated this for the French client, BMI. And this was called the Alpha 10C Laser. And this was the first demonstrable terawatt laser. And the terawatt is a big leap from the megawatt.

GM: You indicated earlier that it's going to be some time before we know exactly what we have. How long can they keep the cap on something like this?

CO: I was explaining earlier about this three-tiered technology—the "porosity membrane factor"—that certain key officials in the Pentagon know what resources are at hand. I would suggest that this is not common knowledge with the average soldier or field commander. But in a time of extreme duress—Let's say

Zhirinovsky decided to recapture Alaska—at that moment in time I'm sure things would be revealed. Certain key people would be allowed access to this and it would be deployed.

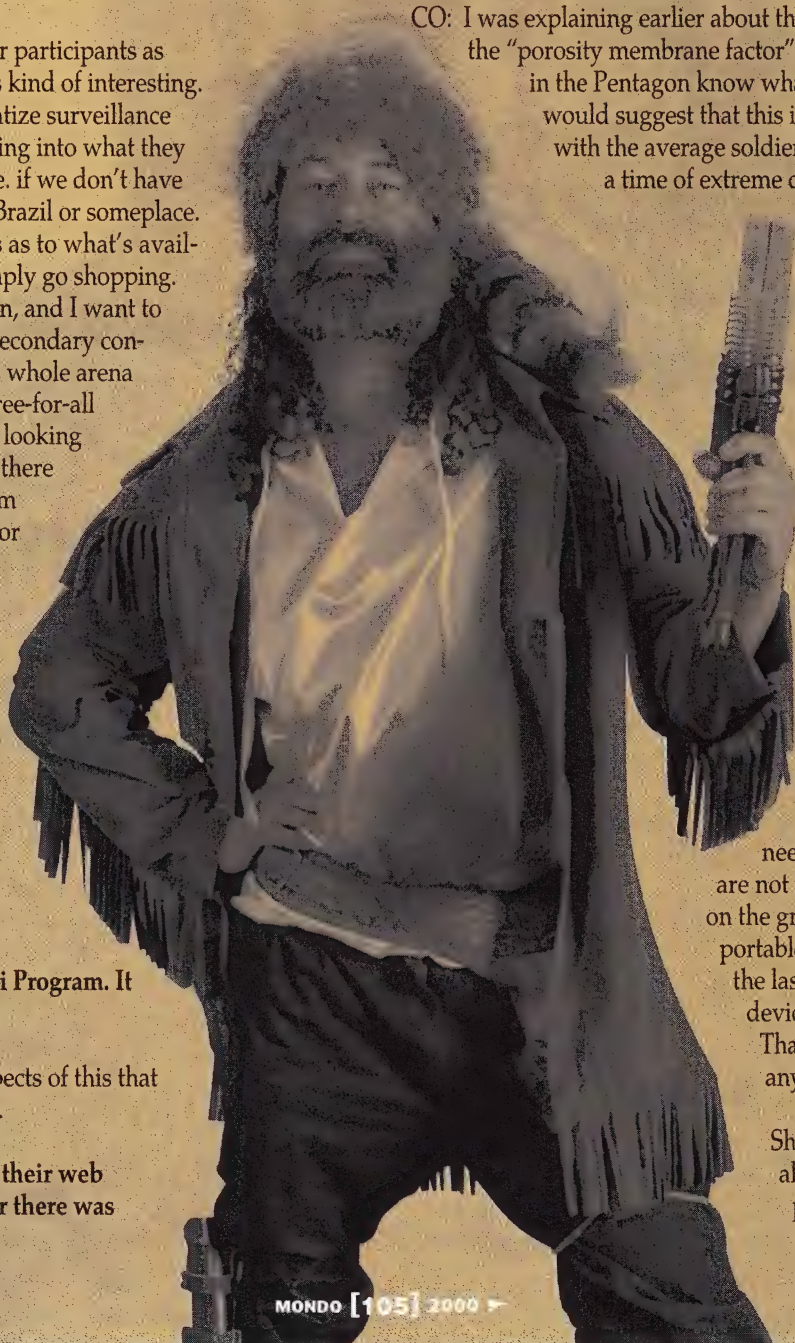
GM: Somebody asked if we used lasers in Panama?

CO: Don't know. It might have been, but I don't know if it was really necessary.

Panama might have been a testing ground. I

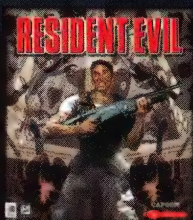
need to point out that lasers are not used to cause harm to troops on the ground—except for the portable blinding lasers. Most of the lasers are for neutralizing other devices, aircraft and missiles. That's where the big money is, anyway.

Check out the Belgian Arms Show—that's where you'll find all the big military whores and pip-squeak dictators. **ME**



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RESIDENT EVIL (PC)

Virgin Interactive
800-874-4607

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT

It's at times like this—when you find yourself stumbling around a sprawling, haunted mansion in the absolute sepulchral dead of night, with the leaking, violated remains of your colleague at your feet and yowling horrors massed just outside the only known exit—that you think: "I'd feel a hell of a lot better if I had a rocket launcher right about now." But would you? Would you really? Would it really make any difference, standing there in the fouled-wood gloom of some claustrophobic corridor, hearing the moaning, bloated, shambling thing coming around the next corner for you, and knowing that any second now you're going to see it...?

Well, here's your chance to find out.





by CHRIS HUDAK | ILLUSTRATION BY KINO

Otis and Mom

MONDO [107] 2000

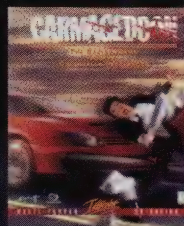
Resident Evil, converted for the PC from the best-selling PlayStation title of the same name, is a horror-movie buff's dream—a cinematic, 3-D, eerily atmospheric and bloody adventure game set within the magnificent but diseased walls of a vast estate where things have gone terribly, terribly wrong. You're a member of a Special Tactics and Rescue Squad (S.T.A.R.S.) unit, and mere moments ago you were searching the moonlit woods outside for the downed helicopter of your sister team. You found various bits and pieces of their bodies at the very moment that the monsters (who ate the remaining bits and pieces) found *you*.

Firing panicked shots over your shoulder all the way, you ran blindly for shelter—leading yourself and the other members of your team right into this labyrinthine, echoing, evil house filled wall-to-wall with abominations.

What were you thinking, asshole?

Resident Evil is truly cinematic, with the actions of your polygonal character witnessed and controlled from a series of skewed camera angles, Kubrick-style views down dim hallways, paranoid fish-eyes from the upper corners of confined spaces, and long shots with slow, ambulatory dead men lurching into frame from somewhere off-camera

toward your character. Adding to the cinematic experience is the occasional cut-scene, dramatically advancing the action—when you enter a room or perform an operation which starts a story-driven sequence of events, control of the onscreen events seamlessly reverts to the computer, your current view suddenly letterboxing for a few moments, then just as seamlessly reverting to you again. For the most part it's elegantly done, without a lot of cheesy, jarring changes to full-motion video which would disturb the delicate tension of the game. And tension there is—almost every convoluted chamber and moodily-lit corridor has something horrible waiting in it, and the ones that don't will soon seem to be *too* quiet. In either case, the only appropriate stance to adopt is the strangely macho paranoia that comes with wandering around a big, scary house with a gun in your hand. The great equalizing principle in *Resident Evil* is that everything, human or not, bleeds. If it moves, shoot it, and keep shooting it until it falls over dead in a spreading pool of red. If it doesn't move, shoot it anyway, or it might *start* moving. Sometimes—*surprise!*—it gets up *again*, grabs hold of your leg and starts chowing down, giving you no choice but to kick its rotten-melon head into necromantic oatmeal. When in Rome, baby.



Carmageddon (PC/Mac)
Interplay Productions
800-462-2752

DON'T GET M.A.D.D., GET EVIL

The really disturbing thing about *Carmageddon* isn't that somebody would make it, nor that so many somebodies would want it. The really disturbing, frightening thing is that many of those somebodies probably *drive*.

Carmageddon is a fast, loose, true 3-D racing game with no rules, no morals, no ethics and just one law—The Timer. Complete your objectives before the timer runs out, and you're golden. It sounds harmless, but it's not—*Carmageddon* has harm to spare, harm to burn. In this race, the objective is to win any way you can—and if winning demands abridging the course, destroying all opposing vehicles or running down every last onlooker, businessman, window-shopper, beach-bunny and little old lady unlucky enough to still be on the street when the go-flag drops—(1,000 bonus points to whichever driver manages to pulverize the flag-waver on the way out)—then so be it. Every broadside ram inflicted on another car, every innocent pedestrian liquefied on the sidewalk, every startled farm animal pinned helplessly in your sights before it's smeared into steak *tartare*, translates instantly to cash, which can be used to repair car damage on the fly. That's right—instant cash for vehicular manslaughter. *Carmageddon* has no rules, only credos: *Money fixes everything*. And: *Get the fuck out of my way*.

Carmageddon is playable as a point-of-view racing game, but the third-person, follow-cam view is by far the best way to witness the action, which ranges from the reasonably realistic (at lower speeds) to the absolutely ridiculous.

Every car here—a variety of outlandish and cartoony designs that evoke cult movie classic *Death Race 2000*—can make zero to one hundred within a few seconds off the line. The problems arise immediately as the



dense, shifting column of cars all jockeying for pole position begin to clash and scrape and shriek against each other until one of the cars breaks away, either by a deft maneuver or by accident. Nine times out of ten, that's all it takes to set off a massive chain-reaction, and within seconds the deadly, toy-like vehicles (sharklike sports cars, spindly dragsters, wide-tired hearses) are all over the road—colliding with each other, sliding into walls, spinning up icy slopes, tumbling over cliffs, fishtailing messy, red swaths through groups of pedestrians, laying rubber and blood, killing livestock *and* getting points—



multiple-kill and splatter bonuses—for all of it. If you survive the opening debacle, you can race against the clock to complete the circuit, or you can simply hunt down the rest of the competitors and/or pedestrians. Aside from one special ranged weapon (*the Electro-Bastard Ray*) the combat here is up-close and very personal, so you shouldn't be surprised if particular cars, even in games against the computer, seem to have it particularly

in for you. It's easy to get sucked into a round of automotive jousting, roaring past your target at 100+ miles per hour, slipping into a screeching bootlegger reverse and doing it all over again until the determined opponents finally meet head-on, and such cataclysmic (yet somehow survivable) clashes are where the much-touted realism of *Carmageddon*'s physics engine goes joyfully and mindlessly out the window. I mean, just try hitting *anything* at 170 mph. Try hitting a little kid; what makes you think hitting a cow or an oncoming car is gonna be any easier? The results of such apocalyptic collisions are often just plain ludicrous, with vehicles tumbling end-over-end for blocks—getting bonus points all the while from the tapioca and ketchup pedestrian roadkill.

No matter—you're not here for realism, you're here because you're a twisted little troll who should never have gotten a license. Interplay still has promotional *Carmageddon* bumper stickers showing a maniacal driver's face and the words: *So Many Pedestrians, So Little Time*... but I'm not sure I'd ever put it on any car of mine—just imagine having to explain *that* one to the boys in blue.



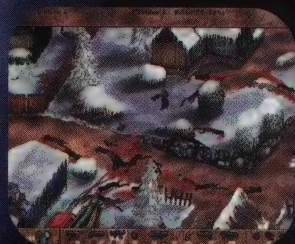
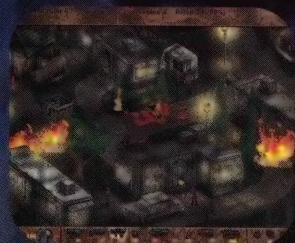
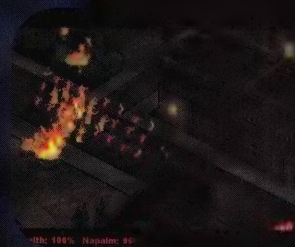
Postal (PC/Mac)
Ripcord Games
888-797-5867

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

If you're an advertiser, sitting there reading this... trust me, just stop right now. Take a walk or something. You don't even want to *know* that your product can be found among the same pages as this game review. Remember *Blue Velvet*? "You know what a love letter is?! It's a bullet from a fucking gun! You get a love letter from ME, and you're fucked FOREVER!"?

While the troubled protagonist of Ripcord Games' controversial new killfest *Postal* has no obvious affiliation with the US Post Office, he delivers *lots* of love letters to *lots* of reluctant recipients—and if he could talk, the immortal words of Frank Booth would be some of his very own. Oh, waitaminute... he *can* talk, and while our armed anti-hero—a trenchcoated, wisecracking misfit who goes only by the moniker of 'The Postal Dude'—is out in the streets gunning down cops, security guards, sheriff's deputies, SWAT teams and scores of understandably surprised men, women and children, he continually mutters sweet nothings to himself in a kind of three-faces-of-Eve cheerleading routine: "Only my weapon understands me," he laments, taking out a police officer half a block away with a hail of automatic fire. "Oh, did that hurt?" he inquires, after shotgunning a little girl in the back at point-blank range. "You're the man," he coos to himself, setting an even dozen parading trombone players aflame. "O.J.!" he roots, hauling ass down an alley with cops in pursuit after vaporizing a gas station with a portable rocket launcher.

In *Postal* players control—from overhead and isometric viewpoints—a single paranoid and heavily-armed outcast on the run from the Powers That Be, with the nebulous goal of eliminating a set percentage of *hostiles*—usually, law-enforcement types—in each unique urban and suburban game level before moving on to the next. Helpless, unarmed civilians don't count as *hostiles*—and game purists with some rudiments of conscience can attempt to play by carefully and methodically



killing only the armed and circling Johnny Laws—but it doesn't usually work out that way. Automatic weapons are notoriously inaccurate, flaming gasoline burns everything without distinction, and a skipping girl-scout looks uncannily like an ATF agent to a heat-seeking missile.

What's your goal as you kill your way through truck stops, Main Streets and rural trailer parks? Ultimately, you suspect the Air Force must have something to do with your being padlocked out of your house, pursued by every law agency in Arizona and generally dismayed with the quality of your life, but that's a notion for later consideration... for now, it's YOU against THEM.

Postal's unique, hand-painted environments (non-tiled) eschew a musical soundtrack in lieu of ambient urban sound effects which increase in volume as you move your *Postal Dude* from one area to another. Impressive. The mood of paranoia reigns supreme as voices all around call out things like "Haven't you had enough killing for one day?" or "Get down on the ground!" or "Drop your weapon!"—or the cries from the scattered wounded: "He's going *Postal*!" "My eyes!" and the particularly chilling "I caaaaan't breathe!" (delivered in a woman's breathless, wet gasp of pain). Not every hit is a clean kill, and sometimes the only way to silence the voices of the wounded is to walk up to the writhing victim and press the "X" key for a formal, solemn execution, complete with ominous incidental music.

All this sounds scary enough, but the truly alarming thing about this anthem game for late C20 America is its utility as a dry run visualization tool for just such a one-man rampage. One gears up; one takes shots with an eye for opportunity, for panic; one adopts guerilla tactics, already running to the next attack point even as the grenade just lobbed is causing havoc in a crowd; one sticks to the alleys, the defensible positions, the happy accidents of obstruction and line of sight; one utilizes the shielding advantages of noncombatants; and one constantly thinks: "What would I do... if I were one of THEM?"

Sick? You bet it's sick—a kind of do-it-yourself six o'clock news kit. The only thing missing is the disgruntled trip to visit the soon-to-be ex-boss or soon-to-be ex-girlfriend at work... Well... maybe there'll be *Postal 2*.

SEGA SOFT


Flesh Feast (PC)
SegaSoft
888-734-2763

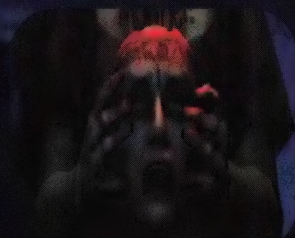
CHEW 'EM A NEW ONE

After the all-too-tangible horrors of our three previous floats in this parade of blood and death, the over-the-top, cartoonish supergore of SegaSoft's *Flesh Feast* actually comes as something of a relief, a psychic snack, an After Eight mint that just happens to have a few stray flecks of bone and brain material in the mix. Essentially a computer-gaming homage to classic zombie films such as *Night of the Living Dead*, *Flesh Feast* is a single- or multi-player PC game set on an island overrun by an army of the recently reanimated. Just as in the movies, the goals for the beleaguered humans are pretty straightforward: shoot, chop or otherwise terminally disorganize all that on the island which is moving but ought not to move, and then abandon said real estate with as many survivors as possible.

Played from an overhead and slightly offset view, *Flesh Feast* takes place in the usual locales—hospitals, graveyards—as well as some unlikely and film-inspired ones—shopping malls, offices and even an airport. The zombies are legion, but slow and lumbering, and can be hacked into manageable pieces with a variety of implements. *Flesh Feast* is gory, to be sure, but it's largely guilt-free killing since the beings in question are not strikingly human—and oughta be dead anyway.

In *Flesh Feast's* multiplayer mode, you can also play the bad, dead guys, lurching slowly but in great numbers toward your human victims. Kill one of the humans and you have two options open to you that aren't open to the human players: either wait and let the recently-deceased reanimate and become part of your undead army... or just eat the guy right there. Peckish players absorb not only a full day's supply of vitamins and minerals but also any useful powers or attributes of the dearly departed. If you opt for dining in, your remaining human foes will not be idle—their guys are faster and more dexterous than yours, and they have pistols, shotguns, fire, elaborate traps, the trusty axe, and, of course, the chainsaw (attentive players note the subtle modulation in the chain saw's sound effects as it saws through relatively soft flesh, into relatively hard bone, and back out again). In extreme cases, unarmed humans may have no choice but to pick up recently amputated limbs—yours!—and use them against you.

A final caveat: *Flesh Feast* has incredibly graphic cut-scenes—the ones which involve brain-eating have some of the wettest, most gruesome sound effects ever burned onto a disk. 



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